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Limited, 100 Old Bailey, London
EC1A 3DF, and printed by Northampton
Mercury Co. Ltd, Queen's Mount,
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The Times Literary Supplement

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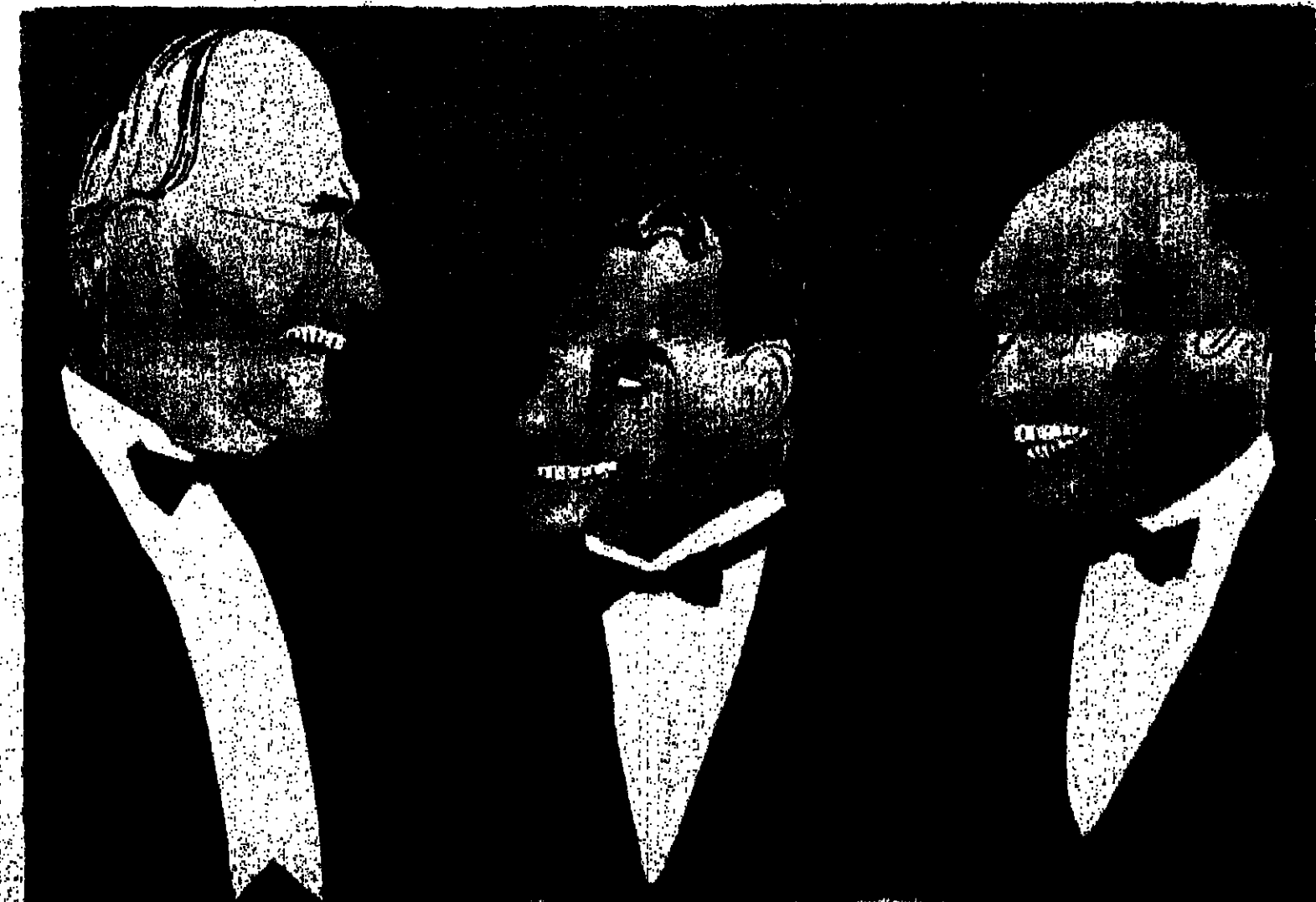
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Gerald Prince, *French Forum*

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From Don Juan to Tristan

David Lodge

MILAN KUNDERA

The Unbearable Lightness of Being

Translated by Michael Henry Heim

314pp. Faber. £9.50.

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BILL BUFORD (Editor):

Granta 11: Greetings from Prague

252pp. Granta Publications, distributed by

Penguin. £3.95 or £10 for four issues.

Graham Greene, when described as a "Catholic

novelist", is apt to say that he is, rather, "a

novelist who happens to be a Catholic". Milan

Kundera, who was expelled from the Czech

Communist Party in 1950, reinstated in 1956,

expelled again in 1970 and finally forced into

exile, has been insisting for many years that he

is not a "dissident novelist" but a novelist who

happens to be a Czech at a time of peculiarly

tragic and poignant political experience for his

country. Though he writes, inevitably, about

that experience, he is offended by a political

reading of his work. In an interview with *Granta*, Ian

McEwan asked him why.

Because it is a bad reading. Everything you think is

important in the book you've written is ignored. Such

a reading sees only one aspect: the denunciation

of a communist régime. That doesn't mean I like

communist régimes: I detest them. But I detest them

as a citizen: as a writer I don't say what I say in order

to denounce a régime.

Kundera repudiates the sentimental Western

attitude, which sometimes takes the form of a

perverse envy, that persecution automatically

confers a special value and authenticity on

writing from Eastern Europe. There is a character

in his latest novel who has a Czech émigré

mistress called Sabina, a painter:

Franz greatly admired Sabina's country. Whenever

she told him about herself and her friends from

home, Franz heard the words "prison", "persecution",

"enemy tanks", "emigration", "pamphlets", "banned

books", "banned exhibitions", and he felt a curious

mixture of envy and nostalgia... the trouble was

that Sabina had no love for that drama. The words

were ugly, without the slightest trace of romance.

The only word that evoked in her a sweet, nostalgic

memory of her homeland was the word "cemetery".

Sabina finds a biography of herself in an exhibition

catalogue that reads like the life of a saint or martyr:

She protested, but they did not understand her.

Do you mean that modern art isn't persecuted

under Communism?

"My enemy is kitsch, not Communism!" she replied, infuriated.

From that time on, she began to insert mystifications in her biography, and by the time she got to America she even managed to disguise the fact that she was Czech.

Milan Kundera has never, of course, tried to

disguise his Czech nationality, but he has inserted "mystifications" into his later fiction in

order to elude reductively ideological interpretation. His marvellous first novel, *The Joke*

(1967), written in Czechoslovakia, for Czechoslovakians, did not need that protection.

A novel constructed on classic modernist lines, it uses temporal rearrangement of the

narrative line and shifting limited viewpoints to retard, but not ultimately to frustrate our

understanding of its complex plot. *The Joke*

cunningly interweaves sexual with political intrigue, betrayal and disillusionment, and maintains a

miraculous balance between comedy and pathos, irony and compassion. Not surprisingly, it became a cult book of the Prague

Spring of 1968, and probably only Czech readers can fully appreciate its subtleties. Certainly

Kundera felt that his huge international success, partly sustained by the wave of sympathy

for Czechoslovakia under Russian occupation, vulgarized its message.

His first response seems to have been to

eliminate overt reference to politics in subsequent fiction. *The Farewell Party* (1976), for

instance, is an erotic black comedy almost indistinguishable in content from a British or

American novel in the same genre. With *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1978;

English language version 1980), Kundera let

politics and his personal experience of political oppression flood back into his fiction, but protected

against simplistic political readings by a postmodernist technique. This novel is full of

gaps, discontinuities, unanswered questions - what the deconstructionist rhetoricians call

aporias. It tells seven separate stories, only two of which concern the same character, but all of

them linked by the voice of the authorial narrator, who comments, confesses and digresses in a

transparently autobiographical fashion, rather reminiscent of Kurt Vonnegut's

Slaughterhouse 5. And just as Vonnegut combined parodic science fiction with realistic and

documentary modes of writing, so Kundera uses the technique of "magic realism" (now

especially associated with Latin American writing, though Kundera would say he learned it

from Kafka) whereby some extreme human situation takes the form of a grotesque image

or action that is logically impossible but conceptually fitting and aesthetically satisfying.

Thus, at one point in *The Book of Laughter*

and *Forgetting*, political demonstrators dancing in a ring are so exalted by the affluence of ideological togetherness that they rise into the air and float away from the disenfranchised author-narrator like an airborne wreath.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being is rather

more conventional in form than its predecessor. Fantastic events in the magic realist mode

are naturalized as dreams; the story, though episodic, concerns a single set of interrelated

characters. Its continuity with *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* is most marked in its

emphasis on leitmotif and authorial commentary, and it makes very clear that, although

Kundera writes about people ineluctably entrapped in politics, he is not a political

novelist. He is rather a metaphysical novelist, that epithet used to evoke the English metaphysical poets as well as the technical philosophical sense: a writer who investigates, with

a bold combination of abstraction, sensuality and wit, the problematic interrelationship of

sex, love, death and the ultimate mystery of being itself.

According to the author-narrator, the difference between those who do or do not believe in

a divine creator is less important than "the line separating those who doubt being as it is granted to man (no matter how or by whom)

from those who accept it without reservation". In the latter category are all ideologues, whether of the Left or the Right, whether

Communist or anti-Communist (for no one who attributes absolute importance to political

struggle can afford to doubt being); in the former category are the novelist and the kind of people he is interested in - men and women for whom the treacherous ground of being is

desire.

Milan Kundera has always been fascinated by the Don Juan figure, but *The Unbearable*

Lightness of Being is his most elaborate and exhaustive treatment of the theme to date. The

chief male character, Tomas, is a Czech surgeon, a divorcé, a womanizer (an "epic"

womanizer, Kundera explains in one of his whimsical typologies, "one who desires to possess the endless variety of the objective female world", as distinct from the "lyrical" womanizer who seeks his "own subjective and unchanging dream of all women"). Tomas has invented

something he calls "erotic friendship" as a means of enjoying many mistresses without

being responsible for any one of them. This works very well until a simple waitress called

Tereza, whom he picks up in the restaurant of a country town, makes him the gift of her total

love. Tomas is unable to resist this love, and reciprocates, but his Don Juan self goes on philandering. To Tomas, sex and love are quite distinct, but to Tereza his infidelities are deeply wounding.

Then the crisis of 1968 and the Russian

occupation shakes up their lives. Tomas, who has imprudently published an anti-Party article

in a newspaper, accepts the offer of a job in Zurich, and Tereza accompanies him, hoping

that exile will solve the problems of their relationship. But he goes on betraying her, sometimes with Sabina, who has also emigrated to

Switzerland (and who starts a liaison of her own with the liberal academic, Franz). Tereza, convinced that she is only making Tomas miserable, returns to Czechoslovakia. Tomas, at

first relieved, soon finds that he cannot live without Tereza, and follows her. Both know that there is no chance of getting out of

Czechoslovakia again.

The black marks on Tomas's political record

caught up with him. He is demoted from surgeon to GP; then he is expelled from the medical

profession and becomes a window-cleaner. This occupation affords endless opportunities

for erotic adventure, and thus exacerbates the old problem with Tereza. She persuades him to

move to the country, where he drives, not very efficiently, a pick-up truck, and they enjoy a

life of modest contentment with their much-loved mongrel bitch, the anomalously named

Karenin.

Sabina, meanwhile, has ditched Franz at the

very moment when he leaves his wife for her, but the political romanticism Sabina had

inspired leads him to join a demonstration in Thailand. The demonstration is a fiasco; Franz

is mugged on the streets of Bangkok and dies from his injuries. Sabina goes to Paris, then to

the United States, where in due course she learns that Tomas and Tereza have been killed

in an accident in Tomas's badly maintained truck. Since they were on their way to a cheap

hotel where they regularly spent weekends, she concludes that they were happy.

As usual with Kundera, a summary of the

plot is very different from the plot as experienced in the text. We share Sabina's news about the deaths of Tomas and Tereza, for

instance, long before we come to the narrative of their life in the country, and the novel actually

ends with the first of their visits to the hotel in the neighbouring town, their simple pleasure

in the excursion poignantly overshadowed by the reader's knowledge of their future fate.

Shifting focalization presents the same incident

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to us more than once. The novel is divided into seven parts, and the titles of the parts that belong to Tomas and Tereza, "Lightness and Weight" and "Soul and Body" respectively, are leitmotifs on which Kundera plays many variations.

Lightness and weight is one of the fundamental oppositions of the physical world, or our conceptualization of it. Parmenides ascribed a positive value to weight, a negative value to lightness, but Kundera finds "the lightness/weight opposition... the most mysterious, the most ambiguous of all". This presumably is the consequence of living in a post-Christian age of moral relativity; also an age of unprecedented social and geographical mobility for the individual, in spite of all the repressive machinery of power politics. Freedom - freedom to pursue happiness in one's own way - is the ultimate value of modern culture, and freedom is surely "light" rather than heavy. Burdens are heavy. But then, as Kundera reminds us, so is the weight of a man's body on a woman's in the act of love. (Not, apparently, the other way round: Kundera's view of sexuality is undeniably macho.) "The heaviest of burdens is therefore simultaneously an image of life's most intense fulfillment." The carefree philandering which Tomas enjoys is associated with lightness, his compassion for Tereza's needs with heaviness. When she leaves him in Zurich for a couple of days,

he felt the sweet lightness of being rise up to him out of the depths of the future. On Monday he was hit by a weight the likes of which he had never known. The tons of steel of the Russian tanks were nothing compared with it. For there is nothing heavier than compassion.

This feeling is what leads him to follow Tereza back into Czechoslovakia at the cost of his career, and, ultimately, his life. "He died as Tristan, not as Don Juan," is Sabina's epitaph on him.

As for Tereza, she is by nature committed to heaviness: "she took things too seriously, turning everything into a tragedy... and failed to grasp the lightness and amusing insignificance of physical love. How she wished she could learn lightness!" Her problem, her leitmotif, is a dualistic split between soul and body. She sees her soul as trapped inside a material body that all too often reminds her of her mother, a

coarse, resentful woman who made Tereza's adolescence a misery by her immodest speech and behaviour.

Thus, although the characters' lives are shaped by political events, they are not determined by them. Tereza and Tomas return to Czechoslovakia for emotional, not ideological reasons. He refuses to retract his article not as a courageous act of political defiance, but more out of bloody-mindedness and complicated feelings about his son, who is involved in the dissident movement. He allows himself to sink in the social scale from surgeon to window-cleaner partly because he secretly longs to be free from responsibility, "to make heavy go light". His and Tereza's eventual deaths are accidental - not the régime's fault, but Tomas's own. They are meaningless deaths - like Franz's. The death on which the narrative dwells with most detail and emotional intensity is that of the dog Karenin.

Sabina lives more consistently by the code of lightness than Tomas, but her repeated jilting of lovers, her restless movement from one place, one relationship, to another, is seen as compulsive behaviour, punishing the repressive father of her childhood. She leaves Franz "simply because she felt like leaving him. Had he persecuted her? Had he tried to take revenge on her? No, hers was a drama not of heaviness but of lightness. What fell to her lot was not the burden, but the unbearable lightness of being."

This mysterious phrase, which gives the novel its title, seems to be very much associated with the state of exile, since Sabina, unlike Tomas and Tereza, never returns to Czechoslovakia. And since Sabina is an artist, whose views on art often echo Kundera's, one cannot help wondering whether the "unbearable lightness of being" does not express some anxiety of the novelist himself about the effect of exile on his own work. "The characters in my novels are my own unrealized possibilities," he writes, "each one has crossed a border that I myself have circumvented." In the case of Tomas and Tereza it is a real, not a metaphorical border, and Kundera sometimes seems to be straining to see, or imagine, what it is like on the other side.

The point came up in the conversation with McEwan, who asked, "Exile then, is not a form

of 'unbearable lightness'?" To which Kundera replied, "Lightness, yes, perhaps, but more bearable than unbearable." Empirically, this is obviously true. There is no way in which Kundera could practise his art in contemporary Czechoslovakia, while in his adopted France he is accepted and respected as an important modern writer. Nevertheless, there is a "lightness" about this new novel that an unsympathetic reader might describe as slightness, or thinness. The characters are rather perfunctorily drawn, with very few details of dress, physical appearance, domestic décor etc. The absence of such "solidity of specification" is of course a familiar feature of one kind of post-modernist fiction, but in a book of such length and leisurely pace the reader cannot help wondering for it. What we get in its place is the "metaphysical" commentary of the authorial voice - speculations and generalizations about love and death and desire which sometimes hover on the edge of the banal, if they do not actually fall into it. "What is flirtation? One might say that it is behaviour leading another to believe that sexual intimacy is possible, while preventing that possibility from being certain. In other words, flirting is a promise of sexual intercourse without a guarantee. Perhaps that sounds more profound in Czech or French - than it does in English, but it is a strikingly original thought in any language."

The English-speaking world was slow to recognize what a remarkable writer Milan Kundera is, partly because the first English translation of *The Joke* was a very bad one (a now authorized translation was published by Faber in 1983 and is now available in a Penguin edition, 267pp. £2.95). By a familiar irony, it seems likely that *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* will get much more attention here than any of Kundera's previous novels, although it is not his best. It is less gripping than *The Idiot*, less surprising than *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. New readers should start with books rather than with this one; but readers who, already acquainted with Kundera's oeuvre, will find much to admire and enjoy in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Part of it can be sampled, together with two fine essays by Kundera (one on Kafka and the other on the disappearance of central Europe as a cultural entity), in the current issue of *Granta*.

anti-war story in the tradition of Tolstoy's *Sevastopol Stories*. In *Attalea Princeps* (1879) he describes an exotic palm-tree growing in a conservatory in a botanical garden, which decides to seek liberty by breaking through the glass dome. It succeeds, only to be disillusioned by the bleak Russian autumn outside and then cut down by order of the director. The story yields many symbolic interpretations and was widely seen as a political statement, but was the emphasis on the palm-tree's heroic feat, its *podvig*, or on the ultimate futility of its gesture? Within fifteen months Alexander II was assassinated. No popular rising followed; on the contrary, repression increased. *Attalea Princeps* seemed to be uncannily prophetic.

The most curious and dramatic event in Garshin's own life took place in February 1880. A Polish student, Miodetsky, tried unsuccessfully to shoot the effective co-ruler of Russia, Loris-Melikov, and was sentenced to death. Garshin wrote to Loris-Melikov, imploring him to put to death the *idea* of violence by sparing Miodetsky's life. He decided to deliver the letter in person on the eve of the execution. Somewhat improbably, he was granted an interview (only in 1934 did written evidence come to light to confirm that this meeting took place) and was not a figment of Garshin's hyperactive imagination). Loris-Melikov must have said a few conciliatory words and Garshin left in a state of high elation, convinced that he had achieved his non-violent *podvig*, and turned back the relentless tide of evil in the world. Within a few hours he heard that the execution had taken place. It was enough to upset the ever-precarious balance of his mind.

Before his illness reached its crisis, Garshin paid Tolstoy an unannounced visit at Yasnaya Polyana. When Tolstoy asked the young stranger what he wanted, Garshin replied: "A glass of vodka and a herring tail." This established an immediate rapport. Like Chekhov, Garshin

revered Tolstoy without being able to take aboard the whole of Tolstoyism. Garshin and Chekhov met only once, but Chekhov paid tribute to Garshin in a fine story, *The Breakdown* (1888), dedicated to his memory.

Garshin's own breakdown lasted almost two years. For several months he was confined to a lunatic asylum. His experiences there provided painfully raw material for the story with which his name has become most closely associated, *The Red Flower* (1883). A mental patient becomes obsessed by the idea that all the evil in the world is concentrated in a particular kind of poppy growing in the hospital gardens. With this poppy he must engage in a life-or-death struggle. The poppy defends itself by giving off a deadly vapour. Cunningly evading the watchful eyes of the hospital staff and displaying superhuman strength, the patient succeeds in destroying the third, and last, poppy, but in so doing, sacrifices his own life. Like *Attalea Princeps*, *The Red Flower* makes an indelible impression and is richly symbolic, but to find other stories to match its intensity of feeling one must look ahead to Chekhov's *Ward No. 6* (1892) and *The Black Monk* (1894).

Garshin's published work fills no more than a medium-sized volume. Peter Henry prefers to think of him as a miniaturist rather than a minor writer, and is at pains to show that he "was not a writer with a single hero and a single theme... nor was he a writer with a single style". Apart from some predictable villanelles in the 1890s and early 30s, Garshin's reputation has remained high in the Soviet Union, but in the English-speaking world he has sunk into relative obscurity. The publication of this scholarly work - the first full biographical and critical study - is bound to stimulate fresh interest in a strikingly unusual man and writer. It is good to know that a volume containing twelve of the stories is shortly to appear in a new English translation.

To make decent provision

Harold Perkin

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB
The Idea of Poverty: England in the early Industrial Age. 595pp. Faber. £20.
0571 131778

In an age when the welfare state is under attack from both sides - from the "revisionists" of the right who believe that the free market allocates welfare more efficiently and abundantly, and from the poverty lobby on the left who believe it to be failing the poor - it is salutary to be reminded that such arguments are as old at least as industrialism. In this penetrating and refreshing book Gertrude Himmelfarb, distinguished historian of Victorian minds as distinguished as John Stuart Mill, Darwin and Lord Acton, takes a new look, not at the nineteenth-century poor law and its practical administration but at the changing ideas of poverty which contemporaries brought to it. During the Industrial Revolution, she is able to demonstrate, poverty changed from "what it had always been: a natural, unfortunate, often tragic fact of life, but not necessarily a demeaning or degrading fact" to "an urgent social problem" which threatened the stability and progress of society and therefore required the most draconian measures for its eradication.

Starting from Samuel Johnson's compassionate adage that "A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization", she shows how that test came to be applied more severely to a narrower and narrower definition of the poor until the New Poor Law of 1834 tried to confine it to "paupers" only, and among the able-bodied only to those who proved their pauperism by accepting "less eligibility" in the union workhouse.

How this separation of the new small pauper class from the old "labouring poor", more than half the population, came about is a more complicated story than it is often portrayed. It is usually blamed, in a blanket condemnation, on Adam Smith and the classical economists, who destroyed the old "moral economy" of pre-industrial England and replaced it with the callous "nexus of cash payment" in Carlyle's phrase, which turned labour into a commodity.

On the contrary, Professor Himmelfarb holds, Adam Smith, far from being an apologist for a new amorality, was the harbinger of a "new kind of moral economy", based on his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* published seventeen years before *The Wealth of Nations*, in which "sympathy" between all members of society was as much a principle of human nature as self-interest: "The wise and virtuous man is at all times willing that his own private interest should be sacrificed to the public interest of his own particular order or society," and ultimately to the greater interest of the state and even of the universe. Smith believed in the free market only because the intervention of the state had more often than not been on behalf of the rich and powerful and against the interests of the poor, whether as labourers or consumers, and because it was more likely to produce "a progressive state" in which "the condition of the labouring poor, of the great body of the people, seems to be the happiest and most comfortable". He was the first to argue systematically for high wages, against the opposition of Bernard de Mandeville, David Hume and Arthur Young, as encouraging both the "propagation" and "the industry of the common people", and he supported both the old poor law and state education.

Smith had curious disciples. Edmund Burke railed against the "pulling jargon" of the "labouring poor", and argued that the only "poor" were those who could not work - the sick and infirm, orphan infants, and the decrepit aged, who were the only proper objects of pity, charity and poor relief. The younger Pitt, surprisingly, introduced a bill in 1796 to supplement the poor law with rates in aid of wages, family allowances, money for the purchase of a cow, insurance against sickness and old age, and much else, though it unfortunately died in committee. Patrick Colquhoun introduced what was to become the powerful distinction between "poverty" - the state of every one who must labour for subsistence - and "indigence" - that condition in society which im-

plies want, misery and distress". Jeremy Bentham hoped to make money by managing all the poor of England in 500 houses of industry, and bitterly blamed George III for thwarting his "pauper plan". Tom Paine proposed a new land tax to support a mini-welfare state for the needy one-fifth of the population, but he remained a bourgeois political radical rather than the proletarian socialist he has been made out to be by his modern admirers.

All these Smithian disciples believed in succouring the poor, in the old sense, by one scheme or another. It was that classic villain of the classical economists, the Rev Thomas Malthus, who "de-moralized" political economy and gave the ratepayers and the policymakers a glorious excuse for separating out the pauper class, removing them from the labour market and preventing them from propagating. Even he until 1796, two years before his famous *Essay on Population*, believed that "as it is the duty of society to maintain such of its members as are absolutely unable to maintain themselves, it is certainly desirable that the assistance in this case should be given in the way that is most agreeable to the persons who are to receive it". It was Malthus's oedipal reaction against his father's admiration (not noticed here) for William Godwin's and Condorcet's notions of the perfectibility of man and the progress of society which led him to the "overkill" weapon of the "principle of population", the supposedly mathematical theorem that since population increases by a geometrical progression and food supply only by an arithmetical one, the mass of mankind must always be poor.

Although Malthus struggled hard in later editions of his *Essay* to escape this diabolical logic - and Himmelfarb skilfully brings out the flaws in his reasoning, which took in even Marx and Darwin - the legacy of Malthus was to turn Smith's cheerful progressive political economy into the "dismal science" of economics and to give the poor man without work no room at "Nature's table". Only the ingenuity of Nassau Senior and Edwin Chadwick could devise a treatment for the redundant poor which, by offering them the harsh alternatives of refusing relief or restraint from breeding, escaped the Malthusian trap.

The New Poor Law, then, was no Malthusian, in that its principal begetters, Senior and Chadwick, were neither abolitionists nor pessimists about the tendency of population to outrun the means of subsistence. On the contrary, they were anti-Malthusians, and believed that, provided the working classes were not "demoralized" by indiscriminate relief, productivity would increase both real wages and general prosperity. As is well known, they did not intend the workhouse test to apply to the non-able-bodied poor, for whom they prescribed separate buildings or even outdoor relief. Nevertheless, their rigid segregation of the pauper residuum from the rest of the labouring class - so wilfully ignorant

were they of the real conditions of the industrial working class, with the new trade-cycle of alternating ease and stress - exacerbated all the problems of the new industrial society, and enraged the opponents of the "new Bastilles".

Their opponents were numerous, vocal and intellectually powerful. *The Times* thundered for a decade against the "Tyrants of Somerset House" who made poverty a crime and punished it with incarceration. Carlyle condemned the "false, heretical and damnable" theory behind the new law, and used it to explain the bitter discontent of the working classes which, rather than their poverty, was the real "condition-of-England question", though he was as stern an advocate of the work ethic and the punishment of idleness as its proponents. Cobbett argued that the poor had as much right to relief as the rich to their property, and that to deny the one was to undermine the other, to break up the social compact and reduce society to chaos. On the other hand, *The Poor Man's Guardian*, typical of the unstamped radical press of the 1830s, said little about the problems of the poor, which it thought secondary to the political question of universal manhood suffrage, the panacea for every social problem. Chartism "politicized the poor", but it too - as distinct from the Anti-Poor Law League, one of its many tributaries - was prepared to do little for them until political emancipation made them "authors of their own history".

Engels provided Marx with a real flesh-and-blood proletariat to concretize his abstractions, a proletariat immersed in total, unrelieved poverty which extended to every realm of life - cultural, moral, and intellectual as much as material - a poverty that erected a class so different as to constitute a different "race". This notion of the poor as a different race or nation was in fact the common coin of the age, popularized by Disraeli's "two nations", by Mayhew's "discovery of the poor", (a curiously unrepresentative poor of London streetfolk criminals and prostitutes), by the philanthropic "ragged" and the criminologists' "dangerous" classes, by the "Gothic poor" of George Reynolds and the yellow press, by the caricatures of Dickens and Cruikshank, and by the real industrial poor, rare in fiction, of Elizabeth Gaskell.

Professor Himmelfarb looks at all these images of poverty with fresh eyes, cutting through the mouldy rags of interpretation which have been piled upon the poor and their interpreters for generations. In the process she has done a very great service, showing how the Industrial Revolution was accompanied not only by a new and ever-changing problem of poverty but by a series of intellectual revolutions, in moral philosophy, political economy, social science, radical and Tory politics, and above all in the "moral imagination" concerning the poor. It is a brilliant and convincing book, and we must look forward, with suspended imaginations, to its promised sequel.

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PETER PORTER

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If God made Man in his image, man has abundantly returned the compliment, the process being epitomized in two seventeenth-century poems about music. Milton's "At a Solemn Musick" laments the Fall whereby "disproportion'd Sin Jarr'd against Nature's chime", and yearns for a return to the "Perfect Diapason", the oneness of the octave between man and God. Dryden, on the other hand, in his St Cecilia odes, dismisses God as a mystical entity, equates Nature with scientific law and uses that as an analogy for social institutions: so that the mundane power of the God-King supersedes the divine power of God. Though "this Universal Frame" began in "Heavenly Harmony", it ran "through all the Compass of the Notes" in order that the octave - Milton's Perfect Diapason - should "close full in MAN", the apex of creation. The notion, though never so extremely expressed, was not new. The Renaissance had symbolized the dedication of man in the ceremony of the King's Two Bodies: his mortal corpse carried, at his funeral, to its last rest and dusty disintegration; and his garishly coloured effigy, made of relatively durable material, which represented his "eternal" divinity as a terrestrial institution.

The analogy also functioned at more psychologically mythic levels, notably in the concept of the Mercurian Monarch, the theme of Douglas Brooks-Davies's book. The author traces the motif throughout English literature during "the epochs" - roughly from Spenser to Pope - when monarchy most cogently embraced a philosophical as well as political ideal. Mercury is the winged messenger who hopefully links earth and heaven. He is also the inventor of the lyre and, through music, the creator of concord in church and state. He tends to merge into Orpheus, a shamanistic priest with musically magical powers; and into Hermes, another lyre-maker and a guardian of (hermetic) secrets. Christianity appropriated Hermes in the so-called Hermes Trismegistus, who was supposed to have lived in the time of Moses, though his genuine dates were between the second and third centuries AD. Through the Latin versions of Ficino, Hermes Trismegistus became central to Renaissance alchemy, being regarded as an unfallen Adam empowered by the Philosopher's Stone.

The highways of this story are not unfamiliar; the byways are illuminatingly explored by Brooks-Davies. For Spenser, Elizabeth I is the supreme Mercurian Monarch, as she was to the popular imagination. Mercury drops up in the guise of an English Arcadian shepherd. Colin and his pan-pipes; in the robes of Moses by way of an identification of Mercury's caduceus with the prophet's serpent; as Egyptian Isis with the help of Plutarch; and in Arthurian legend by way of Merlin. The last-named analogy is the most fascinating, as becomes evident in the theme's evolution during the seventeenth century when, in Dryden's *Fables*, in Milton's *Comus* and *Lycidas* and in Marvell's *Upon Appleton House*, Mercury-Hermes becomes part of druidic lore and of the Arthurian, Welsh-Celtic Matter of Britain. Marvell's Mercurian Mary Payfax heralds England's rebirth after the agony of civil war; and Brooks-Davies is probably on the mark in suggesting that the mysterious resonance of Pope's "slight" *The Rape of the Lock* owes much to its being about monarchy, a hermetic marriage and the Salvation of England; a large theme under which the verse's witty elegance never wits.

Interesting though these literary manifestations of the Mercurian theme may be, they are peripheral to its physical projection in the masque, the subject of the book's central chapter, "Hermetic Conservatism". One speaks of physical projection because the essence of

masque was not words but dance, viewed by the Elizabethans as a victory for humanism, for a man-made rather than God-made order, triumphing over chaos. Sir John Davies, in his poem "Orchestra" (1596), calls dancing "this new art", which of course it was; it merely seemed so to the Elizabethans in that they made of it a new social philosophy - almost a substitute for traditional religious belief. Though the discussion in Davies's poem takes place in classical antiquity, the point lies in the concluding prophecy: the ultimate realization of Love's order (dancing) will occur two thousand years hence, in the reign of Elizabeth, "our glorious English court's Divine Image, as it should be in this our Golden Age".

So the masque is essentially contemporary: not quite art but a ritual enactment of the Mercurian theme, for when the masquers are finally unmasked they prove to be not legendary creatures from classical mythology, but the King and nobility, who are the temporal State. The gods are ourselves: or at least the King and his angelic minions, our representatives. As Brooks-Davies demonstrates, Ben Jonson's masques give the most persuasive verbal gloss on the masque's mythology, emphasizing the identity between poetic, musical and terpsichorean grace and the spiritual grace they render incarnate, in so far as the central protagonist (the King) is God's emissary. Jonson's tough intellect and sinewy if gracious verse did not countenance the mindless euphoria whereby corporeally mortal masquers pretended that in their ritualized earthly paradise Time might be immobilized. They could imagine it could only if they had grown too high on self-esteem and/or fermented liquors to notice it. Certainly effects of bathos were common, the grandiose ritual being in more than one sense dissipated in a tipsy fit of the giggles from the fine ladies, or even in the collapse of the monarch himself. Sir John Harrington, describing a masque presented in 1606 as homage to Christian IV of Denmark, tells us that "Charity came to the King's feet . . . she then returned to Faith and Hope, who were sick and spewing in the lower hall".

Theoretically, the masque did allow for human fallibility in the antimasque, a grotesque rout of satyrs of which Comus' randy crew is the most compelling instance. But the poetic virility of Comus' rout belies their traditional meaning as an antimasque, not to mention Milton's moralistic intention: for the point of the antimasque is to claim that, in our hyper-civilized community, evil and error may be laughed away. The fallacy of this wish-fulfillment is revealed not in masques, but in the use made of masques and masks by Jacobean dramatists. This is the theme of Sarah P. Sutherland's able book, which hinges on the distinction between masque as idealization and drama as a however stylized simulacrum of reality. By the Jacobean age Elizabethan exuberance had been deflated not merely by political events but also by weariness of the flesh and ego. Bliss cannot always be in our brows' bent; banana skins lurk for the unwary to skid on. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is the only contemporary play to use the masque convention positively, though at a level of psychological insight far beyond any court revel, even if philosophically ballasted. More commonly a masque is introduced, by Marston, Tournier, Webster or Middleton, as "treason's licence": the monarch's best face when a vizier's on. What the mask disguises is not a hermetic God-King but a revenger who will reveal the hollowness of human pretence and pretention.

In Tournier and Middleton the masque itself becomes the antimasque: an ultimate reversal of values. Webster tells on a real antimasque in his rout of madmen in *The Duchess of Malfi*, but this scary charade, far from being "laughed away", projects, as it exorcises, the madness the Duchess's enemies hope to induce in her. There is no more place for sanity than for goodness in a corrupt world. Both masque and antimasque now exist in an idealized present: as must have been discernably palpable in the parallel between Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy* and the two marriages of Francis Howard: We reach a *ne plus ultra* when a Mercurian masque disguises the ultimate crime of rebellion against the divinely appointed overlord.

Background efforts

Claude Rawson

ROBERT M. ADAMS
The Land and Literature of England: A
historical account
556pp. Norton \$29.95.
039301704

Robert M. Adams is a versatile and distinguished critic. He has written both wisely and provocatively on almost every period of English literature since the Renaissance. He has a strong sense of its European context since Roman times, and has edited or translated for the American reader works by Machiavelli, More, Voltaire, Stendhal, Villiers de l'Isle Adam. He is one of the editors of the very widely used Norton *Anthology of English Literature*. The publication by Norton of a massive introduction to *The Land and Literature of England* comes therefore with the double authority of Adams's own considerable standing and of the imprint of one of the foremost academic publishers of the English-speaking world. It will sell and will carry weight. But it is so far below the best standard of its author that readers (and especially teachers) should be warned: shallow, inexact, coarsened by pseudo-liveliness, and grossly unbalanced in its coverage.

In this 500-page book, Shakespeare gets just over a page ("A Quick Survey of the Bard"). As for Jonson, "Ben writes as he may be supposed to have spoken over a tankard of ale at the 'Mermaid'". By way of historical background, "Drake . . . made a slambang attack from behind", thus defeating the Armada. Elizabeth "was infinitely smarter" than Leicester, and "gave him the splendid estate of Kenilworth, unoccupied today" (unsurprisingly, you might think, since it's a ruin, but at least the present is kept well in view: did you know for example that "the chant of 'Cockles and mussels alive, alive-o' resounds not only through Dublin's fair city, but through half the towns in the Islands"?). Mr Locke and Miss Austen, Mr Wells and Mrs Woolf and Professor Grieson, M Boileau and M de Montesquieu, make their appearance in quaint accesses of courtliness. For once, Samuel Johnson isn't the only man to be Doctored, though I hesitate to name any others for fear of provoking Letters to the Editor from hitherto quiescent quarters. And the Habesburg Emperor known to you and me as Charles V appears everywhere as Carlos V and sometimes as Carlos Quinto.

"The intent of this book is to set forth the outlines of English history so that they may serve as background for the study of English literature." As this may imply, the background tends to be foregrounded. In the earlier periods, the foreground is hardly to be seen on the ground at all: Langland and Chaucer get under three pages between them in a thirty-two-page chapter on the Middle Ages. This changes as time throws up ever-increasing quantities of foreground. True, "Tennyson, A Broody Sage", two hundred pages on, gets only as much space as the Bard, but that's already an increase, proportionately speaking, and there are a lot more writers around in the age of the broody sage. By the time the proportions have changed and the background has more or less retreated into the background, we aren't too grateful for the fact. To be fair, Adams warns us in the preface that he's introduced his "own enthusiasms into the literary commentary" because "nothing would be duller than . . . accepted opinions". It's a fact of experience that when authors of reference books and general surveys make a point of announcing that they intend to avoid dullness, we must brace ourselves for a bumpous ride.

Discredited stereotypes and simple misinformation jostle with vigorous displays of critical imperipience. Commonplaces so entrenched that they would be hard to get entirely wrong emerge in clumsy or inexact formulations. As the dislocation of sensibility ushered in "a gathering age of prose", "simple readers were taken in by . . . Swift's 'Modest Proposal' and denounced the idea of killing and eating children". Fielding was "a harum-scarum, unsteady, attractive fellow" whose "feeling was of a Tory strain". The Age of Reason was "filled with madness, suicide and literary

forgery: the categories somehow go together so Collins, Smart, Cowper, Chatterton, MacPherson are treated in a composite entitled "Victims and Impositors". "As long as [Chatterton's] poems were not very convincing; but as poems, they were remarkable achievements, not just for a schoolboy but any standards": a remarkable achievement, a book designed to offer essential information and lively judgment, in the art of giving impression whatever of the subject.

Then came the Romantics. Adams variously labelled Lake Poets and Coleridge School and Satanic School by a "literary establishment" which failed "to grasp the meaning of a whole", the Romantic poets really to be thought of "as a circle". Laburn Cockneys and Satanists together, Blake "always stood a little outside the group". Take *The Prelude* and *Don Juan*: "one of some interesting vibrations from Wordsworth's subtitle over Byron's 'The Growth of a Poet's Mind'". By Blake's prophetic books, a little outside the group, "provide looming and enigmatic challenges to interpretive mountain-climbers". Some reason Hazlitt especially reminds Adams of "the England about to disappear, when . . . put up at country inns without servants or credit cards". Beneath all there seem to lurk some Chestertonian notions. Adams admires Chesterton's "essays", and evidently strains after the manner, with its vigorous *ex cathedra* judgments arrestingly delivered in the crisp and plain phrase. But compare Chesterton's handling of village atheist brooding and blustering over the village idiot, with Adams' which was a somber fatalist, whose studies of men crushed by a malignant fate which he with diabolical skill on their inherent strong stuff, but not very lively. One almost see in slow motion the will to be a minded determination to leave no attention unsaid.

Hardy came in "The Gray Nineties". 1930s "Samuel Beckett . . . started to be from", as also did "a curiously temporary" of young men, mostly poets", whose "included" Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, the wood, MacNeele. Meanwhile, on the page, "detective stories flourished through the period, and thrillers by Rafael Sabatini, Percival Wren, Dornford Yates, and others that ilk were not in short supply. We note even writers for the "high" culture like Buchan, C. Day Lewis, and Graham Greene for examples (!!) often wrote on the side the "low" one". By now the foreground has become too numerous, and too close for cooling judgment. The provocative phrase "increasingly to the loping list."

The book devotes several Appendices to pointing the more perplexing features of everyday life, including British money, measures of distance, and the "baronage". The money we learn that a "florin or half crown equals '2½ shilling' of old money and 'pence' of new. It appears that the casualties of decimalization have been shilling, the mark and the angel, although the loss of the latter was buffered for a time by transitional "10-shilling note, now in use". As to distances: "to convert meters to miles, divide by 2 and add a half; old texts one may encounter now units of measurement, such as fells, leagues; but as these often vary from age to age and in different circumstances . . . no rules can be given here."

Appendix B, on "The British Barons", deals with "kings, dukes, archbishops and such now-obsolete baronage as thanes and ealdormen, who varied from age to age and in different circumstances, a recent example being that 'now that Elre is a separate unit it no longer sends twenty-eight barons to minister: 'Knights are addressed as 'Sir' their wives as 'Lady Eleanor'". The Old is awarded for distinguished service empire . . . by persons of either gender but one of many special medals awarded outstanding accomplishment in one or another

571 TLS May 25 1984 FICTION

Down among the men

J. K. L. Walker

KINGSLEY AMIS
Stanley and the Women
256pp. Hutchinson. £8.95.
009156246

Alfred Nash, the old, rich, powerful and fed-up Harley Street psychiatrist whom Stanley Duke, the hero of Kingsley Amis's new novel, consults about the madness of his nineteen-year-old son Steve, is the author of a book about madness in literature entitled *Don Juan and the Lunatics*. Stanley's hitherto high opinion of Nash takes "a small but sharp dive at this disclosure", perhaps because Cyril Connolly raved about the book. Stanley, born and brought up in South London, is the advertising manager of a Fleet Street daily and thus has no pretensions to literary judgment, although he knows a lot about motor cars. The echoing titles can't be said to apply in his case: comfortably settled into his second marriage with Susan (at thirty-eight some seven years his junior, and the assistant literary editor of a Sunday newspaper), he remains faithful, apart from one excusable diversion. But the second constituents pair off well enough: "All women are mad", proposes Nash; but, alas no, he concludes, otherwise they could be locked up. *Stanley and the Women* is thus about these two aspects of insanity, the clinical and the not-quite figurative, the one treated with clear-headed humanity, the other in Amis's harshest comic vein.

The novel opens with the appearance of Steve late one evening at Stanley's North London house. Soon, his disquieting behaviour crystallizes into two violent outbursts, the ripping of a book and the smashing of a television set at the home of his mother Nowell, Stanley's first wife, an actress who is now married to Bert Hutchinson, a director of television commercials. Nash, called in by Cliff Wainwright, Stanley's family doctor and fellow South Londoner, diagnoses schizophrenia and Steve en-

ters St Kevin's, a mental hospital near Blackheath. Here, to Nash's disquiet, he comes under the care (or falls into the hands of) the psychiatrist Trish Collings. From the start, when Collings tells Stanley that Steve has to be helped to get in touch with his own feelings (a diagnosis which Stanley feels "might have looked a bit thin in a Sunday magazine article"), Amis has her in his sights, picking her off with a ruthlessness unmatched even by his treatment of the group therapists in *Jake's Thing*.

Amis charts the course of Steve's disorder in compassionate detail - his varying response in hospital to drug therapy, his transfer to day care, resulting in two violent incidents - in one of which he is beaten up at an Arab embassy - and a final return to St Kevin's. All this is soberly and sharply done, as is the description of the effects of it on Stanley's marriage with Susan.

The comedy in *Stanley and the Women*, though (and we do look to Amis for comedy: Amis's *Novels Make You Laugh* rather than Bowen's *Beer Makes You Drunk*) stems from the misogyny. Amis here excels himself in enjoyably passionate unfairness about women. A generation ago, in *Take a Girl Like You*, Patrick Standish (like Stanley, and their creator, a Norbury boy) gleefully catalogued feminine vices seen as virtues ("You know, creatures of mood, not coldly rational and impersonal and predictable like the other sex, the one that earns all the money"), to be followed by Roger Micheldene in *One Fair Englishman* with a less amiable male seduction manifesto ("to demonstrate to an animal which is pretending not to be an animal that it is an animal"), and by Jake Richardson's memorable and comprehensive listing in the final pages of *Jake's Thing*. In this new novel Amis broadens his attack to propound a general proposition that women as a whole are mad because of their lack of grasp on reality.

Nowell, Stanley tells Collings, "makes the past up as she goes along. You know, like

Communists"; she has her "own-brand facts". In a very funny scene at the hospital, she and Collings gang up on Stanley and contrive a distorted picture of early parental neglect with him, rather than Nowell, as the blameworthy figure. But she is good with Steve when called upon to help, so Amis lets her down comparatively lightly, making her out as merely vain, selfish and self-deluding - familiar targets for his moral indignation. Trish Collings, on the other hand, is actively malevolent, taking Steve off drugs and releasing him from full-time care to avenge a passing slight, as Stanley sees it: "to fuck you up because you were a



man", says Nash. Susan, too, after a stabbing incident, turns on Stanley and walks out after delivering a tirade on his "whole ghastly south-of-the-river man's world" worthy of her mother, the egregious Lady Daly - "You've no breeding and so you've no respect for women. They're there to cook your breakfast and be fucked and that's it."

There may be more than a touch of truth in

this. Stanley is mildly pleased to be married into the properly accented upper middle class. Nash has an accent "posher than the Queen's"; Wainwright, who comes from one station up the Clapham Junction line from Stanley, has done a thorough job on his accent, "only letting out an unreconstructed SW16 vowel every other visit". South London is not a place that either of them comes from, but an area they got out of, a common enough ambition once. Still, the pub rather than club cronydom of Stanley and his friends fits the image: Bert Hutchinson, revealed during and after a classic Amis party scene on board a barge near Mortlake as affecting hostility towards Stanley and permanent drunkenness in order to discharge one of Nowell's marital demands and evade the other; Cliff Wainwright, in the Admiral Byron, exchanging, in forceful demotic, views with Stanley about Susan, race prejudice and wife-battering ("twenty-five per cent of violent crime . . . You'd expect it to be more like eighty per cent"); Stanley himself drunkenly delivering his final word on women: "if you want to fuck a woman she can fuck you up. And if you don't want to she fucks you up anyway for not wanting to."

Stanley and the Women is perhaps the most skillfully written of all Amis's novels, and for much of its length the most overtly serious. Impotence and misogyny, as in *Jake's Thing*, can be paired off for comic purposes, it may be thought, without straining the genre, madness and misogyny less easily. Amis runs them in tandem, using a narrative technique of short scenes into which the four sections of the novel are broken up to promote a feeling of pace and urgency, denying himself much of the leisurely satirical observation that made *Jake's Thing* so enjoyable a compendium of the Worst of British. In the end, the prognosis for Steve and for Stanley's marriage is not without hope, given a degree of South London stoicism. *Stanley and the Women* reveals Kingsley Amis in the full flood of his talent and should survive its ritual burning in William IV Street unscathed.

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The empire of the clerks

Karl F. Morrison

J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL
The Frankish Church
463pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.
0195269064
PATRICK WORMALD, DONALD BULLOUGH
and ROGER COLLINS (Editors)
Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon
Society
345pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £27.50.
0631126619

Bertrand Russell distinguished "history as a pleasure" from "history as a subject of academic instruction". He approved the former and dismissed the latter, either as a forgettable intrusion into the golden hours of youth or as an esoteric enterprise for the care and breeding of specialists. However, delight and professionalism need not be mutually exclusive branches of historical writing. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill's book *The Frankish Church* exemplifies how strangely, yet fruitfully, they may combine.

During recent years, partly through the efforts of Wallace-Hadrill and his students, the Frankish Empire and Church have come to figure among the most exciting subjects of historical enquiry. The Church is a major actor in the grand, yet tragic, story of how one Germanic tribe, the Franks, rose to power amidst the debris of the Roman Empire, built a vast realm of their own (which some have called "the first Europe") under Charlemagne and, with interminable war, swiftly demolished their own creation and subsided into a new barbarism. In *The Frankish Church*, Wallace-Hadrill has chosen to omit the last episodes of this story. His account begins, in the fifth century, with the Gallo-Roman heritage which the Franks exploited, continues with the Merovingian antecedents of the sixth and seventh centuries and, after a thorough review of the palmy days of Frankish dominance, ends as the shadows deepened, during the last quarter of the ninth century. (A few references to individual writers, however, reach into the tenth century.)

Wallace-Hadrill has a keen eye for the status that, in distant ages, societies assigned their scholars. One glory of *The Frankish Church* is the extraordinary knowledge of Carolingian manuscripts and of the means by which they were produced that he has gained through decades of painstaking study.

The subject of the book is neither the scholarship of the Frankish clergy nor the demands of faith, cult and order that elicited their scholarly enterprises. Rather, it is power in the hands of scholars. Wallace-Hadrill's theme is that Carolingian "efficiency experts" took the legacy of earlier generations into their hands and gave it political form. Ever weaving moral discipline into the warp of secular as well as ecclesiastical government, they transformed and eventually destroyed society through their efforts to achieve inaccessible goals of unity and uniformity. Wallace-Hadrill illuminates a

moment when scholars held and wielded political power, and yet the dreams that they pursued tauntingly ran like water through their hands. He conjures up this sombre panorama with serene mastery of his sources: burials, architectural remains, coins, sculpture, writings in every branch of enquiry that engaged the Franks, manuscripts (including handwriting itself) and words.

His evaluation of the Frankish Church is bleak. He concludes that, had the clergy had the means to impose their reforms, Carolingian society would have been "a police state". Repositories and bearers of "the German mentality", the "engineers" and "efficiency experts" of the reform deemed it "vital to the survival of the Christian polity in the ninth century to expose Judaism, to isolate it and crush it whenever possible". In their "passion for uniformity", they, with "one voice", goaded their kings, one generation after another, into wars of conversion and oppression. Ruthless in their social elitism, they withdrew into self-defended circles, "closed societies" of people who passionately shared a common outlook, societies in which women had peripheral roles, learned enough perhaps to be copyists of manuscripts for clergy and, in domestic isolation, to write an occasional letter of spiritual consolation to their imprisoned men, but always disparaged as temptresses. The social cohesion that "the German Church" achieved was based on aggression, a characteristic shift of "social emphasis toward warfare".

The learning that justified such cohesion and the scholars who would have used it to construct a "police state" were rather limited. The learning itself was largely the "potted information" that "the Carolingian world loved". Alcuin, the Anglo-Saxon monk who was a major initiator of the Carolingian Renaissance, was "no outstanding textual scholar of the Bible", though he devoted himself with heart and soul to biblical studies. In fact, his personal warmth was more estimable than his scholarship. Theodulf of Orleans's great work, the *Libri Carolini*, was "a rush job" heavily revised by others. Speculation was anathema to Agobard of Lyon. Hincmar of Rheims misquoted his sources when he did not actually adulterate or forge texts. "The first impression one gets from Hraban [a scholar greatly admired by his contemporaries] is of dullness . . . which indeed holds true for a considerable part of Carolingian literary production. It is not creative, at least in the modern sense." Here and there, a light shines in this dark Renaissance - Lupus of Ferrières, for instance, with his twenty "really significant" letters, and John Scotus Eriugena, in his strangeness and foreignness - all the brighter by contrast with the encircling mediocrity, and generally destined to be snuffed out, as were Gottschalk of Orbais and Amalarius of Metz, by the stern conformity of their Church. No wonder that the "intensely serious and able men" who framed the Carolingian polity and culture sought escape in poetic fantasies, "even satire".

Academic expertise and the pleasure principle combine in Wallace-Hadrill's characterization: the latter may have weighed the more heavily. He specifically disclaims any intention of providing "a measured account", taking as his motto, *scripti quod sensi* (I have written what I felt), words with which the independent curmudgeon Amalarius of Metz defied those who charged him with obstinately misrepresenting his evidence. The academic norm of self-criticism was also mitigated when Wallace-Hadrill decided that neither footnotes nor bibliography would be comprehensive. In this regard, he followed advice given by the editors of the Oxford History of the Christian Church, for which his book was written. Thus, he also avoided the need to measure other views against his own. He heeded no call to cope with "sincere and well-meaning fools", whom, as Patrick Wormald recalls in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, Wallace-Hadrill "never suffered gladly".

Anyone who gives up the objective standards of self-criticism incurs two risks: first, remaking the past in one's own image, and second, speaking a private language that in some measure bars communication, except in the dialogue of the mind with itself. Evidence of these hazards is present in Wallace-Hadrill's book. Argument proceeds a priori from admittedly exceptional particular writers or rulers to general propositions about society as a whole. Stereotypes (such as "German mentality") are employed to serve the argument for uniformity. Words and phrases like "no doubt", "must", "it may well be" and "probably" alert attentive readers that transmutations from intuition to fact are in progress.

Some fools not to be suffered gladly lived in the ninth century. Wallace-Hadrill's address to the subject is occasionally deflected by his aversion to some salient features of Frankish religion. One of these, the "Carolingian obsession with sin", or "the ninth century's obsessive moral introspection", was intimately related to the use of physical mortifications to induce compunction. . . . Repelled . . . by this attitude, Wallace-Hadrill condemns it, without looking further to the connection between the need for compunction in the monastic ethos and the stern public morality that figures so large in his history. Likewise, his own blurring of "Christianity" with "Church" does not permit him to account for the Carolingian recognition that these terms were distinct and could, in particular circumstances, be mutually exclusive. As a result, he passes over problematic condemnations of the Church from within, together with the implications that these had for secular government.

Remaking the past in one's own image may involve confusion of sources. This too occurs when Wallace-Hadrill quotes a passage from the eleventh-century Pope Gregory VII to illuminate what he judges to have been the view of Carolingian clergy, or a passage by Alcuin to gloss the thinking of Charles the Bald, or texts by sixth-century Byzantines, seventh-century Visigoths and eleventh-century Germans to expand what one can say about Carolingian attitudes toward the Jews.

Understandably, the wish that Carolingians be like-minded with himself occasionally produces uncertainty in Wallace-Hadrill's argument. On the crucial matter of the place that the classics had in the Carolingian Renaissance, for example, he contends that "Carolingian scribes and readers saw the classics as we see them". He holds that "antique literature, both as an example and simply for itself, was a joy". It is not clear how he reached this conclusion. For he also states that Hincmar of Rheims considered "classical pagan literature . . . as mostly irrelevant". Hrabanus Maurus bawled over pagan literature, omitting "what was obviously unacceptable on religious or moral grounds"; and instruction in pagan literature was "elementary and spasmodic". Some art other than history is in play when one asserts that Lupus of Ferrières insisted that "the men who wished to understand the teaching of the Church had better start with Cicero and Virgil".

Discussions of political thought indicate other points at which Carolingian practices failed to yield the desired answers. Wallace-Hadrill asserts that, in the year 810, an imperial ordinance "rested upon the most significant concept of the Renaissance, and yet was completely

generally felt, namely, that the empire was Christian unity and more than that was the Corpus Christi, indivisible and sacred". The portrayal of Carolingian reform in terms of unity and uniformity makes this assertion plausible. Yet, "the most significant concept of the Renaissance" is hard to find widely diffused in Carolingian texts. It would be hard to be told the evidence on which Wallace-Hadrill's provocative statement rests, the moment when the concept was plainly articulated and the consequences that it had. Certainly, any doctrine identifying the Empire with the Corpus Christi would have affirmed sacramental theology taught by the Carolingians, and it would have greatly modified doctrines, inherited from the Father, concerning the hostility between the Church and the world. Further, exceptions that figure in Wallace-Hadrill's discussions of individual writers, notably those of Paschasius Radbertus and Nithard, make the thread of general conviction hard to follow through the book.

Though of less weight, the traces of a second hazard, speaking a private language, impair communication. Terms inappropriate to the period under review, and not found in its primary materials, evoke associations that cloud discourse. Three such terms are "German mentality", "efficiency experts" and "police state". Inappropriate and confusing associations concerning the organization of learning are also struck when Wallace-Hadrill says that authors "published" their writing, that Hrabanus Maurus "joined the teaching staff" at Fulda and that the Frankish clergy were "professionals". Some terms obscure meaning innocently: the "well-bottled Merovingian king" may arouse an image hendiadys naïve, if ribald, smile. However, they too make it doubtful with whom Wallace-Hadrill wished to share his learning, his passion and his delight.

The Frankish Church is an extraordinary mixed achievement, admirable in learning, perplexing in interpretations and disquieting in significance. By its interplay of "history" subject of academic instruction and "literature as a pleasure", it poses serious questions. One of them is the degree to which Wallace-Hadrill's sombre panorama corresponds to the facts. In a deep and valuable way, the book testifies to Hermann Hesse's judgment that fiction is the third dimension of history. Another, more general, question is the effectiveness of so-called objective methods of criticism: the merit, that is, of an author's effort to remove himself from the centre, render himself transparent and, in a poetic act of illusion and humility, let his materials speak for themselves. A third question, most disquieting of all, is whether any "measured account" is possible in history and, if so, whether it can be communicated. That way lies historical Pyrrhonism.

The Frankish Church challenges the accessibility, and hence the worth, of historical truth. Some results of that challenge, issued over the years in classes and seminars, are published in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, a book compiled as a tribute to Wallace-Hadrill. The abundant fruitfulness of his teaching is apparent in this collection of thirteen essays by scholars to whom he did in fact communicate, not only his learning, passion and delight, but also his tough independence of mind. Apart from the fact that, quite naturally, the subjects of the essays were drawn from areas of interest to Wallace-Hadrill, there is no evidence of the cloning of disciples from their charismatic master. The generally marvellous professional "schools" of range of subjects considered and of methods employed is formidable. The simultaneous publication of *The Frankish Church* and *Ideal and Reality* appropriately elucidates why, during the past two decades, the early Middle Ages has been among the areas of greatest progress in historical knowledge, and how Wallace-Hadrill and scholars inspired by him have persistently been among those who stirred and impelled this advance.

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Perplexities embraced

David Lehman

A. R. AMMONS
Worldly Hopes
51pp. Norton. £11.10 (paperback £5.05).
0 393 015 18 1

A. R. ("Archie") Ammons started writing poetry on board a US destroyer escort in the South Pacific during the Second World War. Back in civilian life, Ammons continued to write in his spare time; he was in succession a science major at Wake Forest University, principal of the tiny elementary school in Cape Hatteras, and sales executive in his father-in-law's biological glass company on the southern New Jersey shore. Emulating Walt Whitman, the poet published his first book at his own expense in 1955; a grand total of sixteen copies were sold in the next five years. Only in 1964, with his appointment to the English faculty of Cornell University, did Ammons's vocation and avocation move toward an eventual merger. Then the lean years came to an abrupt end. Nearly forty, Ammons cast his reticence to the wind with an astonishing burst of creative energy, seven volumes in as many years establishing his stature as a major poet, capable of turning a crisis of despondency into an occasion for praise, as in his poem "Still":

so I got up
and ran saying there is nothing lowly in the universe:
I found a beggar:
he had stumps for legs: nobody was paying
him any attention: everything went on by:

Deep sociabilities

Blake Morrison

TOM DISCH
Here I am, There you are, Where were we
54pp. Hutchinson. £4.95.
009 1548713

Always a self-conscious poet, Tom Disch, includes in his new collection a poem dedicated to John Ashbery in which he explains, or justifies, himself as someone who (unlike, we take it, his dedicatee) cannot "keep from the simple sweetness / of seeming to mean / something". It is not the first time that Disch has addressed himself to an American contemporary in order to situate his own lucid and accessible art at a distance from prevailing fashions: his last book, *Burn This*, had poems to (among others) A. R. Ammons, Robert Creeley, James Merrill and Robert Bly, and throughout there was an affectionately debunking treatment of recent American practice. Disch, indeed, often sounds more like a British poet than an American one: his wit and geniality make him a sort of lost voice from the Movement, which is why, perhaps, Donald Davie found *Burn This* "so consistently entertaining and intelligent"; his cheery, introspective experiments with traditional forms - his last book contained a sestina about the sestina, his new one has a long poem about long poems and a riddle whose solution is "a riddle" - we assimilate along with those of Gavin Ewart and Peter Reading; his chatlines ("Yes, Let's" one of his poems is called) can seem almost Liverpudlian.

Here I am, There you are, Where were we exhibits the same concern with structure that distinguishes ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ (poems in not-quite alphabetical arrangement) and *Burn This* (poems all in various ways about poetry). It is divided "provisionally" into three sections implicit in its title: from the lyric and personal "Here I am" to the odes and addresses of "There you are", what Disch calls the "passionately correct description of our environs" that is his task in "Where were we". The first section is the most erratic, ricocheting from some rather slight sketches and snapshots - apartment-hunting in Manhattan, waking in a strange apartment (like Thum Gumm), foreign travel ("Europe the second time is a rack / of postcards and a conversation / about money that goes on till 2 a.m.") - to more discursive poems like "Coal Miners" and "Denver Airport". In the first of these an office-worker reveals his ambivalence towards his company's underground labourers, and becomes by the end a tentative symbol

I nestled in and found his life:
there, love took his body like a devastation:
I said

though I have looked everywhere
I can find nothing lowly
in the universe . . .

A decade after his *Collected Poems* won the National Book Award, Ammons shows no signs of slackening off. Prolific as ever, he seems intent on favouring us with an annual volume of verse - invariably slender, taut and easy to enjoy, an assortment of good poems spiked by several great ones. In 1982 *A Coast of Trees* deservedly won the National Book Critics Circle award for poetry. And, as if in response to the Chicago-based MacArthur Foundation's selection of Ammons as one of a few dozen American geniuses worthy of lifetime financial support, the poet celebrates his *Worldly Hopes* with the exact perceptions, the "scientific and esthetic ramblings & bewilderings", the smartly self-contained asides to which his readers have grown accustomed. Here, for example, is the entire text of "Immortality":

The double lanceolate
needlelike
hemlock leaf

will, falling, catch on
a twitch of old
worm-silk

and, like a fall worm,
dingledangle breezy
all day in the noose

As with every truly original poet, a constellation of Ammons's influences is clearly visible. Harold Bloom has called Emerson the major

literary influence on Ammons, and although the latter implicitly claims not to have read Emerson closely until Bloom had so advised him, he has always had transcendental tendencies. In his versification, his reliance on the American idiom, and his attention to minute particulars, Ammons reminds one of William Carlos Williams; in his fluency at abstract discussion, his interest in ideas and unifying principles, he has something in common with Wallace Stevens. Then, too, as one critic recently noted, Ammons has taken "some of the chill off Frost" - his poems sometimes conjure up the image of Robert Frost with an amiable North Carolina accent. Like Frost, Ammons is first and foremost a citizen of the natural world who loves nature too deeply to sentimentalize it or flinch in the face of its cruelties. He aspires, in the words of one of his most memorable poems, to a "radiance" that "in no way winces from its storms of generosity" as it "illuminates the glow-blue bodies and gold-skeined wings of flies warming the dumped / guts of a natural slaughter". By thus extending a variety of important traditions, including some that might have seemed mutually incompatible, Ammons cuts an anomalous figure: his poems are distinctive in a way that proclaims him larger than the sum of his influences.

Ammons's originality does not reside only in the singular awareness of science that informs much of his work, or his idiosyncratic and effective use of the colon, or his "democratic" bias in favour of lower-case letters. Nobody else's poems manage to sound quite so genuine and unforced as they compress observation into metaphor, identifying the poet's self with what he sees. The five lines of "Winter Sanctuaries" form a sort of compression chamber; in this poem Ammons succeeds in getting under the skin of the squirrel:

The squirrel, bunching branches,
knits a billowing raft
from twigs and, riding air, lifts
one paw to pull in a tip
where shaken maple seed cling.

With the odes of the second section, dependent as they are on the sort of cajolement or flirtation with "you" (the reader) at which he excels, Disch comes into his own. Keatsian echoes are present in the mock-sublime divination of "Prayer to Pleasure" ("Glorious Provider, Sweet gushing source of my oblivion"), in the Romantic odes on the sources of the Ciltummas and the Foux, and in the fine "Ode on the Death of Philip K. Dick". Disch's most sombre meditation so far:

God, if there is a God, and that is something
He could never decide, has thrown him away.
A dumb thing to do; you say? With so much juice
Still to be squeezed, with all that doom could do
To force new bloom from the pollardings
Of late middle age? He might have suffered

much more.
Or he might, let us admit it, have got himself
A golden tan under the sunlamps of success,
Written his memoirs, and made friends with
Leviathan.

Leavelaking of a less sympathetic kind institutes the valedictory ode to New York, a farewell to the city's muggers, junkies and "welfare scum", who have finally driven the poet out ("I don't say Kill them, but I do / Think they ought to be allowed / To kill themselves without our making too much fuss"), or so he claims. If these illiberal sentiments sound less than convincing, that is perhaps a tribute to Disch's deeply sociable art: even at his most misanthropic he manages to sound exuberant and generous-spirited.

The final section is more quirky and occasional, and something of a falling-off, though it includes a splendid ode on monetary inflation, which works by deflating the Romantic ideal it's expressed in ("Higher; and now higher: rise and astonish us"), and also the inventive "Cosmology and Us", which imagines the universe reaching a dead end and being forced to "bounce backward" ("we / of the twentieth century will long since have been / Disassembled into our ancestor's genes") and which incidentally reminds us that Tom Disch, the poet, is also Thomas M. Disch, the SF novelist. It would be foolish to make exaggerated claims for Disch as poet, but he's never less than enjoyable and accomplished, and the new book is his best to date.

Worldly Hopes consists mainly of short, crisp lyrics like "Immortality" and "Winter Sanctuaries", poems in which natural things, clearly etched, are seen to provide sufficient nourishment for this poet's pilgrim soul. But any gathering of Ammons's work is likely to be an arena of rival impulses, and *Worldly Hopes* is no exception. There are the homespun paradoxes ("If something is too / big, enlarging it / may correct it"), the surprising insistence on the invisible ("Since the / unknown's / truer / than the / known"), the vatic announcements and ambitions ("my clear / writing . . . to confuse, subvert, renounce"). Most of the poems are severely economical in their means, but "The Role of Society in the Artist", in its buoyant and discursive way, does justice to Ammons's gifts as a talker and an ironist.

Two of the poems in *Worldly Hopes*, "Hermit Lark" and "Scribbles", can stand with Ammons's finest work. The former is Shelley's "To a Skylark" contemporary American-style, its beauty a function of its simplicity and freshness. The latter proposes what could be the book's credo:

perplexity is such that sometimes it must be
embored before it will clear, to the deep
clear, when it may be put aside, as a bee
puts aside color, pattern, flight when he reaches
at the stigma's base the pure nectar.

Look at "the stigma's base" for a moment. In addition to its social and religious meanings (scar, mark of infamy, mark resembling the crucifixion wounds of Jesus), "stigma" refers to the apex of a flower's pistil, upon which pollen is deposited at pollination; "base" similarly has a moral as well as a botanical application. The point is made with a verbal gesture of great intricacy.

Worldly Hopes is a most welcome book from one who can exult in "moss, beggar, weed, tick, pine, self, magnificent / with being" and who, at another moment, is not above reminding his readers that back in North Carolina, where he comes from, folks pronounce "magnificent", "maggie-went-a-fishing".

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instant crises and four-minute warnings, one can only marvel at the leisurely approach, over many months in 1811-12, to a declaration of war which had become virtually certain long before it actually took place.

Another, much more controversial, chapter deals with the role of Canada in the coming of the conflict. This is not an attempt to revive the old, and largely discredited, argument that the war was the product of frontier expansionism which had Canada as its target in the north-west, and Florida in the south-west. On the contrary, Stagg places Canada firmly in the middle of the basic argument about American maritime rights and British commercial restrictions which had plagued British-American relations since independence, and which had led to the embargo during Jefferson's presidency in 1807-9. Indeed, the policy of economic sanctions which Jefferson and Madison pursued in the embargo and again later had been partly undermined by the use of the Canadian backdoor into the American market. Much more important still, in the years immediately preceding 1812, according to Stagg, was the rapidly increasing importance of Canada to the whole British system of navigation, and of Canadian lumber and naval stores to the British war effort. By this time, Canada was virtually sustaining the Royal Navy's war against France. To make matters worse, northern New England and upstate New York were contributing heavily to the flow of vital war materials down the St Lawrence, and American settlers were increasingly attracted by the cheaper land on the northern side of the frontier.

It is not difficult to construct a very plausible argument to the effect that, in view of the new significance of Canada for Britain and its war effort, the American government must surely have come to see an attack on Canada as the most effective means of forcing Britain to moderate its position, and to respect the shipping rights of neutrals. Invasion of Canada would at last liberate the United States from the shackles of British commercial and maritime domination. In that sense, resort to war and an attack on Canada did not represent a break with earlier American policies of economic sanctions, but a logical culmination of them. The argument may sound convincing, but, alas, the evidence that this was the key to the thinking of Madison and his cabinet simply does not seem to be there. Stagg is reduced to suggesting that the argument was so obvious that Madison did not need to spell it out, or he resorts to phrases such as "It is inconceivable that Madison was not familiar with information about the rising economic importance of Canada to Britain. He attaches so much weight to three articles in the *National Intelligencer* in November and December 1811 about the rapid growth of Canada that he prints them in full in an appendix. These articles, he says, are the closest which Madison's administration ever came to admitting by word rather than deed the full implications of Canadian economic growth. Close they may or may not be—but not close enough to demonstrate conclusively that this was the key to Madison's policy in opting for war. Stagg's case for the "Canadian factor" is intriguing and attractive, but the verdict must be "not proven". Meanwhile, we should not abandon, or even play down, more conventional analyses of the factors which led to war in 1812—maritime rights, economic distress, national honour, party politics, and accumulated frustration.

If doubts persist about the role of Canada in the causation of the war, they inevitably spill over into the area of American strategic planning and war aims. If, as Stagg argues, an attack on Canada was to be the main thrust of the American war effort, one can only say that remarkably little planning or organization had been applied to the question of how this desirable goal was to be achieved. It was one thing to say that a quick strike towards Montreal and the St Lawrence would be the most effective way to bring Britain to its senses; it was quite another actually to carry out any such military operation.

This question relates directly to one of Stagg's fundamental concerns about the American conduct of the war. Quite rightly, he points out that, ever since Henry Adams's classic account, if not before, the dominant theme of most historical writing on the war years has

been the ineptitude of the American war effort. The explanation could of course be, simply, that the Americans were, indeed, inept, but Stagg argues instead that no administration could have intended to happen what actually did happen, and that there must therefore have been some different conception of what the war was supposed to be about and how it should have been conducted. This is where the Canadian factor enters the picture again, but emphasis on Canada does nothing to close the yawning gap between the ends desired and the means devised to achieve them in the war of 1812.

Indeed, the great bulk of Stagg's book massively reinforces the emphasis upon American ineptitude in mobilizing men and resources, and in actually fighting the war. Most impressively it raises that ineptitude from the level of personal shortcomings and individual failure to the level of institutional inefficiency and structural incompetence.



"A View of the New Market from the Corner of Shippen & Second Streets Philad. 1787": an engraving by Thackara after a drawing by the American artist Peale, from *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family, Volume 1* (673pp. Yale University Press. £45. 0 300 02576 9).

Stagg confesses that he is puzzled by the way in which the experience of the war of 1812 implied that the constitution-makers of the 1780s had been less successful than they may have wished. But is there really any great mystery here? The constitution of 1789 was not designed to create an efficient war-making machine. It replaced a system of virtual non-government under the Articles of Confederation by a carefully articulated system intended to make effective government almost, but not quite, impossible. The extra-constitutional devices adopted in the first twenty years under the new constitution in order to make it work—the cabinet, the political parties, the patronage—were all, for various reasons, somewhat rusty and out of condition in 1812. Earlier crises, including the undeclared war against France in the late 1790s, had amply demonstrated the difficulty both of raising adequate armed forces and of raising money to pay for them. The "well-regulated militia" to which Article III of the Bill of Rights refers had already proved its worthlessness as an instrument of national defence.

In 1813, Madison himself urged a vigorous prosecution of the war "to demonstrate to the world the public energy of our political institutions". But one may hazard a guess that he was really whistling in the dark to keep his spirits up. The uncertainties of the constitution in matters of war-making affected even the question of how to make a formal declaration of war in 1812. Madison met the Speaker of the House, Henry Clay, to discuss how best to proceed, in order, on the one hand, not to seem to impose a war policy on Congress, and on the other, to avoid a congressional resolution for war before the President had indicated his readiness to exercise his functions as commander-in-chief.

In the main part of his study, Stagg reveals layer upon layer of incompetence, inertia, lack of will and vision, and shortage of both resources and the skill needed to mobilize them. James Madison himself would be unlikely to meet anyone's specification for the ideal war leader. He did show a dogged persistence, and considerable resilience in the face of military setbacks, political confusion and administrative chaos. But he lacked the personal dynamism or the decisiveness to be an outstanding

leader in war. He was too ready simply to live with difficulties and disagreements; in one of Stagg's more memorable phrases, he often "used ambiguity as a way of advancing his goals". It was hardly a recipe for military success.

Madison's cabinet was riven by internal disputes, crippled by manoeuvring for personal and political advantage, and unsettled by a stream of resignations. Its strongest and ablest member, Albert Gallatin, had numerous political enemies, and his long fight under two presidents, to cut federal expenditure and to reduce the federal debt, made him a reluctant financier of war. The proposals which he did make for new taxes and new loans often came to nothing because of congressional obstructionism, factionalism and procedural entanglements. The other most notable member of the cabinet, James Monroe, Secretary of State, and, later, Secretary of War, emerges as one of the most persistent and ambitious (and least



"A View of the New Market from the Corner of Shippen & Second Streets Philad. 1787": an engraving by Thackara after a drawing by the American artist Peale, from *The Selected Papers of Charles Willson Peale and His Family, Volume 1* (673pp. Yale University Press. £45. 0 300 02576 9).

attractive) political intriguers of the age, hankering by turns after political success and military glory, as means towards his chief end, the presidential nomination in 1816. As Senator Worthington tartly observed, "Mr Monroe seems to have so much to do that I suppose... that he has time to do little or nothing."

Madison lacked much of Jefferson's skill as a manager of Congress and of his party. The strength of the Republican party in the country and in Congress had allowed full play to intra-party squabbles, and a welter of personal, factional and sectional disputes. In consequence, although the Federalists were a weak minority in Congress, they were sometimes in a position to hold the balance between contending factions among the Republicans, and they were hardly likely to exercise that power in ways helpful to the President. The position of the Federalists in the country at large was also an embarrassment to the administration, as the election of 1812 once again underlined that the main surviving areas of Federalist strength were precisely in those areas—New England and New York—closest to the Canadian border where the main fighting would take place.

Even if the political climate had been more favourable and the political will much stronger, however, it is highly doubtful whether American society could have been effectively mobilized for war in 1812. Beyond the rocks of political futility lay the quicksands of financial chaos and administrative inadequacy. Even if Congress had been willing to vote for the raising of all the forces the administration wanted it would never have voted the funds to support them. Even if the money and the supplies had been readily available, the number of men required would not have come forward. Surely Jefferson was substantially right in arguing that the expanding and optimistic society of the infant republic lacked the pool of poor, idle, depressed young men from which armies traditionally filled their ranks.

There was neither a civil administration nor a military command structure capable of organizing effectively for war. The departments of the federal government in Washington were small offices run by a handful of clerks. Feeble as they were, they were constantly embroiled with the state governments in arguments over priorities, allocation of resources, and the

jurisdictions. Stagg offers the intriguing suggestion that the relatively successful record of the navy during the war may be explained by the abject weakness of naval administration which left effective decision-making in the hands of professional naval officers.

In many respects, it may be regarded as a tribute to the character of the early American republic that it was so ill-organized, and unprepared, psychologically as well as administratively, for the realities of armed conflict. But the lack of any serious thought about how this new kind of society could be mobilized for war if and when the occasion arose led to a near-fatal complacency which assumed that everything would be all right on the day. It was not, and, if the British war effort in Canada had not been almost equally flawed, the consequences could have been serious indeed. By the summer of 1814, thoughts of invading Canada had given way to a rather nervous defensive war against a British enemy now liberated from many of its preoccupations with the war in Europe. The British attack on Washington in August 1814 provided a particularly humiliating example of the fumbling inadequacy of the American military effort. But still the lessons were not learnt; when Monroe tried to concentrate in one place a force for the defence of the whole Chesapeake area, the governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia all insisted on keeping their own troops near home.

Along with all the built-in, structural weaknesses of the American war effort, individual ineptitude still abounded. Although Stagg is uneasy on this point, he is too good a historian not to provide unmistakable evidence that this was so. The wretched General Hull, having almost fallen off his horse in full view of his men before embarking upon his invasion of Canada, ended the campaign crouching in the corner of the fort at Detroit, under the influence of drink and drugs, mumbling indistinctly and dribbling incessantly. On his escape into Canada, the egregious James Wilkinson succumbed to fever and diarrhoea, sought solace in whisky and laudanum, and "thus dragged out of his mind" continued his advance in Montreal. Stagg comments that, for all Wilkinson's protestations of his readiness to die for his country, "he had always preferred longevity to immortality". Incompetence (and alcoholic excesses) were not confined to commanders in the field. Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, was an alcoholic, seldom available for business much after noon. Clearly, neither the system, nor the men who were supposed to run it, were properly geared to the demands of making war.

This impressive, if not totally convincing book, reveals much about the society, politics, and government of the early republic. It is a pity, however, that Stagg did not try harder to relate the war effort to the prevailing ideological concerns of the period, and, in particular, the concern with the preservation of republicanism which has been so ably discussed by Drew McCoy and others in recent years. On the other hand, whether intentionally or not, Dr Stagg does trigger off thoughts about the whole American military tradition and the American approach to war-making: the obstacles to firm decision-making, the suspicion of the professional soldier, the faith in the commitment and the efficiency of massed citizen-at-arms, the tendency to see warfare as a unilateral activity, and thus the failure to see the conflict from the enemy's point of view. Above all, this book encourages speculation as to whether the separation of powers under the constitution (and the fragmentation of power in practice) does not positively encourage the gulf between willing the end and willing the means, which characterized this, and perhaps other, American wars. Those who legislate for war and clamour for the achievement of ambitious war aims do not bear direct responsibility for the prosecution of the war, and are left free to cavil about the provision of adequate means.

The problems of the United States government in 1812 were the problems of both governments (and particularly the Confederate government) in the Civil War. The imbalance between means and ends still persists—but now it is the overwhelming means which are out of proportion to the achievable goals.

Rivals in parallel

Peter Marshall

JOHN MILTON COOPER, JR.
The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt
422pp. Harvard University Press. £17.
0674 94750 9

The lives of Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt appear, superficially, to offer for study almost perfectly aligned subjects: less than two years separate their dates of birth and less than a year the close, by disablement and death, of their political careers. Their biographical significance is beyond question. The first two decades of the twentieth century saw both affix an indelible stamp on the pattern of American politics as each wielded and developed the power of the presidency. An understanding of the changing nature of that office and its role in the establishment of the United States as a great power cannot be secured without an assessment of their contributions.

The task is inviting but beset with difficulties. Their political careers, unlike those of their obvious British counterparts, Disraeli and Gladstone, were far more consecutive than competitive. Roosevelt left office in 1908, never to return: Wilson was then still president of Princeton. The one had enjoyed a meteoric rise to national leadership while the other man was still preoccupied with the problems of transforming a university. Their public confrontation was confined to the presidential contest of 1912 which, while undoubtedly providing one of the most dramatic and significant electoral campaigns in American history, would mark the end, not the beginning, of their contest to secure support for their programmes of domestic reform. Thereafter, power was not the prize, since circumstances did not permit its transfer. The two great rivals pursued parallel rather than converging political courses, between which the American people could judge but not choose.

Any attempt to rank the relative achievements of Wilson and Roosevelt must overcome additional problems of substance and judgment. Which president more substantially represented the purposes of Progressivism, in the unlikely event of it being possible to reach a generally acceptable definition of the nature and purposes of that political creed? How successfully can the historian set aside personal preferences when attempting to do equal justice to the incompatible personal and intellectual qualities of figures whose dominant preoccupations still command vehement acceptance or rejection? Even if, as John Milton Cooper Jr, is at pains to stress, differences in policy were often less in practice than in theory, the militancy of Roosevelt, whether expressed in matters of foreign or domestic moment, and delivered with the full force of an uninhibited, though carefully constructed, personality, stood perpetually in opposition to the morality of Wilson, an academic who had belatedly abandoned political analysis to engage in public improvement. The subsequent history of the United States makes it still difficult to treat even-handedly those issues which dating ulished their views on the relationship of business and government, or on the aims of American foreign policy. Such topics present intractable problems in the case of either man: linking the two multiplies the uncertainties.

If complete success in such an endeavour might seem unattainable, it would seem unlikely that greater value will be discerned in any other effort. Professor Cooper, making use of the formidable extent of primary and secondary materials available, does not attempt to incorporate every detail of political careers that would, should such an approach have been adopted, condemn the reader to a work of indeterminate length. His is a referential rather than an expository method, and, de facto, some prior knowledge: that said, his style is clear and considered, though inevitably the need for selective emphasis will elicit differing responses: Roosevelt's term as president receives less attention than does his response to the war in Europe, to the extent that his contribution to national affairs appears more pertinent than institutional. This is by no means an unreasonable view, but it risks the danger of diminishing the magnitude of the political up-

heaval to which the insurgent Republicans contributed. After 1908 Roosevelt increasingly treated party as an instrument to advance his individual concerns, a preference that might well have proved successful if the Democrats had not, by the narrowest and most grudging of margins, selected Wilson as his opponent in 1912. It was a choice that could not have been foreseen, and whose nature remained largely speculative until the new president entered the White House. A greater political irony could hardly have been devised than that which saw the outstanding figure of the age overshadowed by a neophyte whose entry into public life had been encouraged by defeat at the hands of opponents within the confines of Princeton.

Wilson and Roosevelt were not obsessed by personal hostility. They did not enjoy close relations, either of enmity or respect, such as the parliamentary process would have compelled them to form. Their views of one another were not, to be sure, sympathetic, and Cooper attempts to define them by employing Robert Osgood's usage for this purpose of Nietzsche's characterizations of the Warrior and the Priest. Both are said to be possessed of a will to power, but express their ambitions in mutually hostile forms: the Warrior is outright in his advocacy of strength, and views the priest as concealing an ambitious cowardice beneath a pretence of Christian virtues. Such an image may well accord with Roosevelt's prejudices but could not command acceptance from Wilsonians. It does not constitute a sufficiently balanced or comprehensive bond of distinction between the two, or significantly strengthen the analysis. Much the same can be said of the closing chapter, which attempts to indicate the legacy both bestowed upon later American politics: the effort is more ambitious than successful.

This study makes for salutary reading in an election year. Whatever complexities and fascinations the events and personalities of 1984 will ultimately reveal, it is difficult to envisage that the presidential contenders will compare favourably, in either personal quality or political gravity, with Wilson and Roosevelt. The last word has not, and almost certainly never will be said, on their respective merits, but in any future calculation the judgments of Professor Cooper will need to be carefully considered. What is more, much enjoyment will accompany this necessary task.

In Microform

The large amount of material related to America on microfilm and microfiche, ranges from, for example, the archives of the United Negro College Fund (documenting "the struggle for quality education for blacks in the U.S.") to a collection of 3,117 dime novels. Both of these projects are published by University Microfilms International (300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106, USA) who have also taken over the majority of titles published by the Microfilming Corporation of America, which closed down early in 1983.

Chadwyck-Healey's American list includes the Federal Art Project of the 1930s, *The Index of American Design*: "a visual survey of the objects of decorative, folk and popular arts made in America from the time of settlement". The *Index* is now published on 312 colour microfiches, consisting of 15,000 renderings, of costume, wood-carvings, toys, etc. The latest part of Chadwyck-Healey's ever-expanding National Inventory of Documentary Sources in the US was published in April this year. It is called *Federal Records* and consists of the lists of historical materials issued by Presidential Libraries, the National Archives and Records Service and the Smithsonian Institution Archives. Further details are available from 20 Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8DT.

Under the heading "American History and Life", Research Publications (PO Box 45, Reading RG1 8HF) publish over thirty titles, including collections of early American poetry and fiction, American Poetry 1609-1870 and American Fiction 1774-1910. "The latest extension of our American fiction program contains 2,100 titles, including many not found in any published bibliography", runs the catalogue entry for the latter, reinforcing one's sense of the awesomely all-encompassing nature of the medium.

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A better world than this

Oliver Millar

ALISON McNEIL KETTERING
The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral art and its audience in the Golden Age
339pp, with black-and-white illustrations.
Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer. £45.
085115 1884

"Pastoral is a masquerade, a literary game and it has always been." This remark by the contemporary Dutch scholar, J. D. P. Warness, is cited in Alison McNeil Kettering's admirable study of Arcadian themes in Dutch painting of the seventeenth century and their parallels in contemporary literature and drama. *The Dutch Arcadia* provides a corrective to the prevailing general view of Dutch seventeenth-century painting and analyses the status of painting against the general cultural background of its time, by examining a group of pictures which are bound to a literary mode. Many of the pictures strike an unusually charming compromise: "neither a *via contemplativa* nor a *via voluptuosa*... but... a *vita festiva*... a world into which they might retreat in order to celebrate the most agreeable facets of life... a supremely imaginary realm, convincingly removed from the mundane, yet familiar enough to be comfortable". This is precisely the compromise which the plates – a generous display, well chosen and well reproduced – suggest again and again.

Pictures of Arcadian subjects appealed especially to conservative and aristocratic patrons, and to such connoisseurs as Prince Frederick Henry of Orange and his princess, the royal family of Bohemia living in exile in The Hague, and Charles I and Henrietta Maria in Whitehall. Patrons from the merchant classes, who, as the century progressed, became very rich and acquired land, were keen to show that they too enjoyed the same kind of pictures, and, indeed, some of the most charming Arcadian pictures are those of families which are obviously not aristocratic. The first artists to cater for this taste were the painters of Utrecht. Mrs Kettering assigns to the Arcadian genre its proper role in the overall picture of Dutch seventeenth-century painting, stressing the association of pastoral with the French court, as well as with Renaissance Italy; but, as with the related literature, which she discusses so well, the classical or ideal conventions are fused, in a distinctive Dutch synthesis, with native traditions and evoke a most attractive

and uncompromising Dutch mood.

After a very good general introduction to pastoral art as a social and cultural phenomenon, Kettering discusses the single figures of shepherds and shepherdesses which became so popular in the 1620s. This is a genre which also developed into portraiture with Arcadian attributes, capable of expressing a range of moods, from the frankly and enjoyably erotic to the courtly, the innocent and – chiefly at the end of the period – the almost cold-bloodedly lascivious. There are reminiscences of Venice in the works of such painters as Bylert, Honthorst, Moreelse (perhaps the most accomplished) or Ter Brugghen. The popular image (also familiar in contemporary literature) of the "wanton shepherdess", the courtesan in the country dress, had, to some extent, her origins in North Italy: alone, or with a raffish companion, she was a favourite subject of Caravaggesque painters in Italy and the north. But, towards the end of the 1630s, the female Arcadian image becomes, at least in visual terms, a more decorous figure. There is a marked difference between the ladies illustrated by Crispin de Passe II in his *Miroir des Plus Belles Courtisannes* of 1630 and his *Vrais Portraits* published ten years later. The attri-

butes so frequently displayed – apples, plums, pomegranates, birds' nests, shells and garlands – are well analysed and so are the varied moods of the pastoral half-lengths and the shading-off into personifications of the Seasons, the sense (among the five) of smell, Abundance, Fertility or the goddess Flora. Rembrandt's presentations of Flora are given a detailed treatment, and so are the implications of the composite X-ray of his magnificent "Saskia in Arcadian Costume" in the National Gallery which, as we know it, may be only a fragment of a "monumental concert champêtre". Altogether Kettering provides an enormous amount of material on problems of iconography; but her arguments are never forced and never become tedious.

A different mood is struck in the painting of "pastoral courtiers", akin to those painted occasionally at the English court by Van Dyck. A predominantly court portrait "type", it was initiated by Moreelse and Honthorst; but the chic pastoral guise was particularly suited to the style of Van Dyck and those painters whom he influenced in England and in Holland: Jan Mytens, Lely or Huymans, for example. In a staid mood, the Arcadian conventions are used in England by a painter like Cornelius

Johnson; and even the King and Queen are painted by Honthorst as shepherds. Sadly, the portraits are lost, but Fig 55 in *The Dutch Arcadia*, a portrait by Honthorst of a woman (Diana (the caption describes the portrait as temporarily lost) give the flavour of the portrait of the Queen and, in fact, closely resembles her. There is a preciousness about some of these portraits, but it is dissipated later in the century among the plump and smiling figures of children of merchants' families dressed as shepherds. There is a close parallel to the Arcadian pursuits and ideals in the Dutch upper classes, as illustrated in Heemskerk's *Balvische Arcadia*, a specifically Dutch Arcadia, almost a Dutch *Cortegiano* in its depiction of the enjoyment of local country pleasures.

Kettering's examination of parallels between literature and painting are particularly valuable. She provides a careful analysis of a special popularity of painted representations of episodes in two Arcadian classics: *Granida* and Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido*. Early on she discusses more general representations of the shepherd's life, with a searching analysis of Rembrandt's brilliant, ruthless yet often touching etching in this genre. One of the most interesting parts of the book deals with composition, and the significance, of the use of paintings – with their fascinating predilection based on *Il Pastor Fido* with which Van Dyck decorated a room at the selamatsdijk; and the author stresses, rightly, the importance of Van Dyck's lovely essay, the same theme (which hung in another room) and the patron's probable intention of creating something with which his godfather, Henry of France, would have been in sympathy. Van Dyck and the possible link with the tainebleau illustrate once more the Renaissance tradition and the preciousness which was the Arcadian idyll so fashionable in such circles. Kettering wisely cautions us against assuming that there was an automatic link between the painted representations of moments in these two popular works and actual dramatic presentations.

Mrs Kettering reminds us of the "intentional loveliness", as works of art, of many of the pictures she discusses. A series of appendices (on the patrons of pastoral portraits; on the patronage of, and dealing in, pictures of Arcadian subjects; and on the illustrations of the two chief classics) makes a useful adjunct to a book which is notably good in its own right as essential reading for the specialist.



An Arcadian landscape, with a shepherd and a lady on a path and nymphs bathing beyond, from the Circle of Bartholomeus Breenbergh, will be offered for sale by Christie's, Amsterdam on May 29.

Through closed eyes

Graham Reynolds

RICHARD WENDORE (Editor)
Articulate Images: The Sister Arts from Hogarth to Tennyson
283pp. University of Minnesota Press. \$29.
08166 11432

Every picture tells a story, and the narrative content of most novels and poems can be visualised. This volume contains nine essays enlarging, often at inordinate length and with festoons of footnotes, on these truths. The subtitle *The Sister Arts* is borrowed from a book by Jean Hagstrum, to whom the essays are dedicated. His publication examined the effect of the visual arts on the imagination of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century poets. The editor's purpose is to show how such studies have proliferated in the twenty-five years since Hagstrum's book was produced.

The approach to painting adopted by the majority of contributors is frankly expressed by W. J. T. Mitchell. He tells us that in order to accept William Blake as an artist we have to abandon most of our established prejudices about art, including the belief "that optical considerations are foremost in painting". Since painting can only be known by being looked at it is hard to follow this self-contradictory advice; nonetheless, many contributors have done their best to shut their eyes when discussing pictures.

Robert Wark does not replace "optical considerations" by pseudo-philosophical generalizations and his essay amounts to a detailed

indictment of the adjacent contributions. Fearing, with good reason, the corruption of art-historical studies by an invasion of English literature dons, he emphasizes the polar differences between these two spheres of knowledge. He is courteous enough to address his advice to new students, or those who may be thinking of switching from literature to art, but almost every fault in method which he condemns is exemplified elsewhere in the book. He insists on the crucial importance of connoisseurship, and warns that discussion can be centred only on autograph works of established authenticity. He is bold enough to place strict limits on the meanings which can legitimately be found in Blake's symbolism, and distinguishes the conventions which Blake inherited from the artist's own idiosyncratic additions to them. Above all Wark is adamant that any interpretations placed upon works of art should spring naturally from them, rather than be imposed upon them by the whim of the interpreter.

It would be hard to say how many times this basic principle has been flouted in the other essays. To take a simple instance which can be readily refuted, Mitchell says that "Turner framed some of his paintings with rope as a witty way of tying down the voracious which were threatening to burst out of them and engulf the spectator. The recorded fact is that Turner adopted this method of framing solely for the sake of economy when he was exhibiting a few of his Italian pictures in Rome before shipping them home. The rope has no more significance than the cornered legs of a table which he painted them on the upholsterer's

springs with which he fixed them to the stool or Nor is there any sign of a turbulent year breaking the bounds of the picture space in the three works known to have framed in this way: the "Orvieto", the "Medea", and the "Ulula".

Not all the other contributors agree in denigrating the aesthetic qualities of the images they discuss. Karl Kroeber gives perceptive descriptions of the content of Constable's "Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows" and Millais's "The Blind Girl". But he falls to a convincing parallel between these paintings and poems by Wordsworth and Tennyson. What possible link could there be between a deliberately pedestrian folksy diction of Wordsworth's "Michael" and the highly developed, complex sophistication of Constable's later manner? Unlike Lawrence Lipshaw, who thinks that Tennyson was a "blind" poet, Kroeber equates the diction of "Enoch Arden" with the sharply focused realism of the Pre-Raphaelites. A more convincing analogy could have been drawn from the illustrations by Arthur Hughes to the text, since in them the sharpness of observed detail is a convincing commentary on the text, since the despairing eye seeks with an enhanced vision.

Writing for an American audience, Wark points out that there are many thousands of academics concerned with English literature against a few hundred specialists in English art. That so generous a scholar should find it necessary to issue a dire warning against "informal trespassing by those who know little of the future prospects of art is not reassuring.

Meeting with a Master

T. J. Binyon

HAROLD OREL (Editor)
Kipling: Interviews and recollections
Volume One: 170pp. 0 333 27806 2
Volume Two: 241pp. 0 333 27807 0
Macmillan. £17.50 each.

In a contribution to this chrestomathy which describes, some forty years after the event, a visit made to Kipling in the early 1920s, Rupert Croft-Cooke speaks of the author's "extraordinary public standing", and adds: "With all the media of publicity which are ours to-day – television, radio, the cinema and newspapers which count their circulation in millions – we cannot produce a writer with a name one half as familiar as was that of Kipling in his lifetime." He must be right; and he could have added, too, that Kipling's fame was global, not confined merely to the English-speaking world: a striking indication of this is not so much the fact that in 1907 he was the first English writer to be awarded the Nobel prize for literature, as that in 1899, when he was lying critically ill in a New York hotel, among the pile of anxious telegrams was one from the

Kaiser. The gesture was a magnanimous one, after the rough handling Wilhelm had already received in Kipling's verse.

At the same time, as his fame grew, so he shunned its consequences, seeking and defending his privacy with a farouche and intense determination. It was not only the quarrel with his brother-in-law, Beatty Balestier, but also the publicity attendant on the court case, which led to the Kiplings' panic-stricken flight from Vermont – and then from America – in 1896. And six years later charabancs full of tourists, agog to see the great man's residence, drove them away from Rottingdean, with its congenial company of friends and relatives. They retreated to the isolated Bateman's, near Burwash, down "an enlarged rabbit-hole of a lane", as Kipling revealingly describes it in *Something of Myself*. Chary of giving interviews, he was inordinately, though justifiably, jealous of manuscript material. The typewritten letter inviting Croft-Cooke to tea was headed "Private"; Dorothy Ponton, Kipling's secretary, in a memoir printed here, relates how no typescript bearing handwritten alterations was allowed to leave the house; and Christopher Morley tells of Kipling burning

manuscripts in front of his American publisher, Frank Doubleday, with the words: "No one's going to make a monkey out of me after I die."

A public figure, determined to be private: the combination makes Kipling an awkward subject for recollection. Difficult to get close to, he inspired a reverential awe in those who met him, and their memories – in a phenomenon well known to the biographer – are often distorted by the legend or the work. Certainly the reminiscences of Major-General Dunsterville (Stalky) and Michael Gifford White (Dick Four?) seem to come not directly from life, but filtered through the pages of *Stalky & Co.* Of G. C. Beresford (M'Turk) Kipling wrote that he had a tongue "dipped in some Irish-blue acid", and Dunsterville that he was "filled with hatred and contempt for his fellow-men". These qualities are well in evidence here, in extracts from his *School-days with Kipling*: a bracing contrast to the slightly cloying adulation of much of the collection.

The recollections which are free both of this taint and of Beresford's bile are chiefly those of relations: of Alice, Kipling's sister, who shared the appalling experience of the "House of Desolation" in Southsea with him; of his cousin, Florence MacDonald; of Arthur Baldwin, second son of Stanley, grandson of Kipling's Aunt Louisa; of Angela Thirkell, granddaughter of another aunt, Lady Georgiana Burne-Jones, who played Roundheads and Cavaliers at Rottingdean with Kipling's daughter, Josephine, model for Tuffy in the *Just So Stories*, who died in New York at the age of seven.

Harold Orel's selection is a wide one, though naturally he is chiefly indebted to the *Kipling Journal*, from which over a third of the ninety odd pieces are taken. Equally naturally, most of the material has previously been picked over by Lord Birkenhead, Charles Carrington and Angus Wilson in their biographies of Kipling: there are no plums left, just an occasional interesting or amusing detail.

As a young man, on his first visit to the

erns", but he never seems to try quite hard enough, and his unavailing efforts are all too easily swamped by the depression into which he can be plunged by the new. Timidly often shows through when he is confronted with something he fears may be difficult. Of his old pupil John Bayley's *The Character of Love*, he writes, "I shan't understand it, but I must read it", and he notes "the depression into which the perusal merely of the reviews of Iris Murdoch's new novel has plunged me", which is scarcely alleviated by Hart-Davis's assurance that *A Severed Head* is spoken of as being less difficult than her other novels. It is a pity that so vigorous and wide-ranging a taste found itself restricted by an ingrained apprehensiveness, but the positive side of the limitation (which has given the correspondence so much of its charm and appeal) was firmly declared towards the end of the volume: "I have finally decided, quite impetuously", Lyttelton wrote, recognizing a trait that has long endeared him to the readers of his letters, "that I am a square, a fuddy-duddy, an incurable middle-brow, the sort of reader he who shall be nameless sneers at, as one who thinks Housman a good poet."

Sir Rupert is at the very end of his work on the Oscar Wilde Letters, much pressed by the need to find time for the many penultimate tasks of his edition, and needing eight hours a day (on his "days-off") to finish the index. Lyttelton proves to be a fresh-eyed reader able not only to spot tiny errors but to stimulate his friend, ground down by these final stages of preparation, with his view of the fascination of the Wilde material as a whole.

Business affairs at the publishing office prove to be more than usually burdensome, but the year saw the transfer of the firm from its "loathly" Heinemann paymasters, who were far from anxious to part with an imprint that brought little profit but much literary prestige, into the more satisfactory Harcourt Brace stable. The anxieties of these negotiations took their toll of Hart-Davis's health, and from his side the year's correspondence is a tale of recurring sites, diverticulis and backache, interference excessive in so compulsively active a life.

Lyttelton, on his part, in spite of an appreciative allusion to Johnson's regarding an ill man as a scoundrel, cannot help complaining of trouble with his teeth, occasional nausea and eventually a vaguely diagnosed liver complaint that proved to be a rapid and fatal cancer. The end comes with all the finality of a "This correspondence is now closed – Ed." But not quite. Sir Rupert rounds the volume off very neatly with one further "letter", celebrating for former pupils Lyttelton's hundredth birthday last year. It puts into epistolary form his own assessment of the correspondence, his rather surprised pleasure that it has attracted such a following and his hope that his old friend is finding pleasure in the company of Beerholm, Carlyle and Johnson. "Let us hope," he adds, "that Lewis is in another place."

Lyttelton writes rather regretfully of "my pathetic attempts to keep abreast of the mod-

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Lector ludens

Chris Baldick

PETER HUTCHINSON
Games Authors Play
131pp. Methuen. £7.95 (paperback, £2.95).
0416730604

It would have been safe to predict that the literary *jouissance* celebrated by Roland Barthes would not be made welcome in Britain. In this country the playful dimension of literature has usually been suffocated by the culture of high seriousness: frolics begin at Calais, or at Dublin. In this unfavourable climate, literary playfulness can be fully accepted only in the form sanctioned by, and twin-born with, high seriousness itself at Dr Arnold's Rugby: organized games. Presented as a game, literary play can offer the safety and respectability of a strenuous challenge to the competitive or to the curious, deflecting suspicions of Continental frivolity.

Peter Hutchinson is engaged in this sort of cautious smuggling operation; his contraband includes, beside the wares of Barthes, the less scandalous products of Wolfgang Iser's reader-reception theory, which aims to trace the complex permutations of hide-and-seek with which authors tease their readers. Dr Hutchinson begins with an uncertain slipping to and fro between the concepts of "play" and "game" but gradually eases play into the background in favour of particular games and gambits, recognizing "the difference between the self-indulgence which 'play' often represents, and the more disciplined format of 'game'".

The greater part of *Games Authors Play* is an inventory of ludic effects, in the format of a glossary. Unlike most glossaries, however, Hutchinson's invites – and merits – consecutive reading, held together as it is not just by the ludic perspective but by the elementary classification of literary games offered in the first part of the book. In this introductory essay we are offered a scale upon which authorial strategies may be placed between competitive and cooperative poles, and a division of literary games into the categories of enigma, internal parallel, and narrative equivocation. Into this pattern the glossary entries are then provisionally mapped but never schematically forced. This brief exercise is offered only as a starting point for the further study of literary play, and makes no excessive claims. Hutchinson properly resists the temptation to absorb

all the literary devices he surveys entirely into the realm of game, and his account is careful and level-headed throughout.

Games Authors Play is an attractive work, catholic in its range of texts explored and of games enumerated. Certain authors tend to predominate (Nabokov, Robbe-Grillet, Joyce), but Hutchinson can also hop freely from Molière to the minor byways of detective fiction. In the inventory of games, some of the most dignified of modern critical terms (myth, symbol, ambiguity) are obliged to rub shoulders with puns, spoofs, red herrings, and nonsense. The idea that the use of myth in literature may often be a game rather than a sacrament will probably be offensive to some, but one of the more refreshing qualities of this study (and of the reader-reception school from which it derives) is its recognition that a reader picking up a novel will usually be moved by an elementary and manipulable curiosity rather than a search for moral regeneration. Hutchinson's exploration of the tricks which can be played upon this curiosity is carefully detailed and perspicuous, except in one odd misphrasing which would have Borges writing in a language called Latin American.

To judge by the price and the poor quality of paper, Methuen have endorsed Hutchinson's

Doing without a method

Iain McGilchrist

PAUL H. FRY
The Reach of Criticism: Method and perception in literary theory
239pp. Yale University Press. £18.
0300029241

At last the idea that there is an inherent limitation in all critical methods, by reason of their being methods, is catching on. Until recently anyone rash enough to say so clearly – and worse still to explain why – was told that the idea was mystical (or alternatively commonplace), elitist (or populist) and impossible, and that everyone already believed it anyway. Alas, this pleasing babble of opinions is giving way to an ominous concord, as a result of which what used to be a decently unpopular view looks like becoming the latest *chic*. Now Paul H. Fry has decided to do something about it. He has hit on the expedient of putting this view forward in such a way that it will remain largely incomprehensible, thus avoiding any hint of vulgarity.

Occasionally Fry subtly lapses into the comprehensible (thereby retaining the reader's attention long enough for him to appreciate the full density of the overall work), so that I shall not spoil the author's effect too much if I confine myself to what he himself gives away. To begin with, the preoccupation of Aristotle with method is taken by Fry in an early chapter as an instance – probably *the* instance – of the weakness he decries. This chapter, "Aristotle as Oedipus: Form and Recognition in the *Poetics*", is followed by "Longinus at Colonus: The Grounding of Sublimity", in which Longinus' acceptance of the irrational in sublimity is offered as an alternative. There follow discussions of Dryden's "Preface to *Fables*" and Shelley's "Defence of Poetry", which in different ways follow up the hint from Longinus. (Historical influence is not Fry's point; Longinus for example "takes a Chicagoan view" of language.) Walter Benjamin and, to a lesser extent, Hans-Georg Gadamer form the focus of the last chapter, which presents Fry's conviction that method mistreats the unpredicted and unpredictable in the experience of reading, here characterized as "distraction". Distraction consists in all the possible factors that can interfere with form and formalisation. But it is this same state and no other, this failure of formal attention, which is our (later-day equivalent) duly pared down to our almost fully naturalised circumstances, of the sublime, of "grace", of the uncanny, and of the aura which remains, for Benjamin, in the vicinity of illumination.

Distraction is the reader's liberation, according to Fry, and reading the book one begins to see what he means. Only one phrase in the above extract, however, gives the true flavour – I particularly like that "almost". Small words often do hard work for Fry. Notice the masterly use of "or else" in this sentence, a

decision to aim at a broad audience. His impressive range of examples from many literatures is controlled by the availability of English translations, and he outlines the relevant theories of Barthes, Iser, and Shklovsky clearly and without undue elaboration. All this is helpful to the novice, but there are inconsistencies: we are told at least twice what is meant by a palindrome, but then "chrestomathy" and "onomastic" are used without explanation. More disappointing in a book which offers to guide the beginner to the various pleasures of ludic literature is the niggardly bibliography, restricted to secondary works on the grounds that most of the primary texts mentioned are too famous to require detailing. This is hardly true of, say, Raymond Queneau, whose work cited as *Stylistic Exercises* will elude some readers; its English title is in fact *Exercises in Style*.

Games Authors Play could be put to valuable academic use as a primer in the study of narrative techniques, but as an inauguration of the extended theory of literary play for which Hutchinson hopes, this study is too cautious to break any ground, and stops well short of defining, let alone tackling, the larger problems of such a theoretical enterprise.

A choice, postponed in this book, will have to be made between literature as game and

games in literature. The first approach risks merely restating old problems in new metaphors; the second will settle down to the collection of marginal curiosities. Hutchinson tends toward the second option, but this opening definition of a literary game points to the first:

any playful self-conscious and extended means by which an author stimulates his reader to deduce or speculate, by which he encourages him to see a relationship between different parts of the text, or between the text and something extraneous to it.

It is hard to see what, apart from women, is being excluded here; the problem of definition is merely shifted back to the nature of the playful.

The really surprising theoretical statement, in this context, is Peter Hutchinson's assertion that literary games are the least rule-bound of all human games, and that they may have no rules at all, the basis for this claim being that Sterne and his fellow-gamblers flout the rules of literary convention. But their impact study depends all the more on these old rules, while they are at the same time condemned to impose new ones. The history of non-literary games provides much evidence of this process, for which one need look no further, again, than Rugby.

more or less random instance: "The sublime is chthonic, 'earth-born' like the volcano, yet it is also divine – or else it is the human euhemeristically exalted."

In the last pages, Fry becomes incautious and tells us what he likes to see in a critic. "My own taste runs to a personable but philologically keen, densely allusive criticism", he tells us, "that takes more and more diverse cues from its text than is customary." Despite that oddly disturbing "more and more", and the rather adventurous idea of "personable" criticism – enhancing the pleasure of the text? – it is clear that Fry happily disapproves of the aspiration to impersonality which is sometimes mediated, more often flamboyantly inverted, by the critic's chosen method. Here a part of Fry's tiny mind intelligent thesis becomes momentarily intelligible. Obviously anxious that, now the open, this may appear too like something *chic*, Fry adroitly reveals that this personable, philologically keen critic is none other than his old Yale colleague, Geoffrey Hartman.

Paul Fry's next book could be interesting. The obsession with method has resulted, as he so rightly puts it, in an "oversimplification of criticism by oversophistication". A complete shift of attention is long overdue. This book will not produce it, but by the time of his next book, that shift will be well enough established for him to drop the flowers and say it – what ever it is he has to say – with words.

Ghost Towns

It was like this: a town of mirrors and running water and music downstairs. And when that stopped, after the children were in bed and the last dog had barked itself hoarse, the gate to the store-yard banging all night, arguing fitfully with the humdrum logic of the electricity generator.

Or this: one small, overcrowded zone around the station busy with snack bars, markets and coloured lights and the hiss of trains... And the darkness beyond, ransacked palaces behind cardboard façades, the odd tourist searching out tombs for someone who could speak his language.

Or this: a town of streets intersecting at right angles between high walls, where it was always sunset although only those with the privilege of the highest offices could watch it set and could see when a street might end in a sheer drop. Graffiti were written in corridors by those who claimed to have solved the clues.

It was like waking light-headed after sleeping for days in a sunlit room, with the curtains shifting at the window and the alarm clock stopped at five to twelve. And walking away down the empty approach roads, through commuter suburbs and light industrial estates, with nothing in mind

except the bell perhaps of an incoming ship clanging through mist. Already a week late, delayed by storms on the coast, the new governor is dreaming of deserts and frozen lakes – but arrives at last among an expectant people. A vivid welcome. The massacre hasn't even begun.

CHARLES ROYLE

Via form to politics

Colin MacCabe

PETER WOLLEN
Readings and Writings: Semiotic counter-strategies
228pp. Verso/NLB. £4.95.
086091755X

The two most significant cultural magazines of the 1970s for those committed to political and aesthetic radicalism were *Bananas* and *Screen*. It is a measure of the interest of Peter Wollen's collection that he is able to reprint material from both journals. The texts gathered here range from a rigorously formal Proppian analysis of the narrative functions in Hitchcock's *North by North West* to a short story about an extraterrestrial robot, called *Friendship*, caught up in the fighting in Jordan in September 1970. The juxtaposition is not, however, ridiculous. If it would be foolishly reductive to talk of a unity of theme, a concern with form and history runs through both Wollen's analyses and the fictions. The ways in which form determines meaning, and how forms find their multiple determination in social, ideological and technological change – it is here that the collection finds its diverse unity. The fictions, and the films which Wollen made with Laura Mulvey over the period of these essays, are merely the moments when those concerns become most intimately engaged with sexuality – its variable constitution and the possibilities of our reflecting on those variations.

The book is divided into four sections; the first opens with a paper delivered in 1969 on the prospects for the semiological analysis of the cinema, the rest of the section takes various classic Hollywood films and subjects them to different varieties of formal analysis; the second considers the relations between art and revolution with particular reference to film and painting; the third consists of fictions first published in *Bananas*; the final section reflects on aesthetic and historical questions about the cinema.

In some ways it is difficult to praise the book highly enough. Much modern theoretical writing on the cinema is needlessly hermetic, caught within a vicious circle of poor writing and cultural (and indeed cinematic) ignorance: a barren reciting of litanies, semiological, Marxist, psychoanalytic. Wollen is never less than lucid and he is constantly aware both of the variety of the cinema's own history and the relation of that variety to developments in other arts. The book is full of illuminating cultural juxtapositions and acute historical parallels. Nowhere is this more obvious than in his essay on the two avant-gardes, where he analyses the ways in which avant-garde film in America has been influenced almost entirely by painting, and untouched by the political concerns of the 1920s that so influenced Rus-

sian film-makers, Brecht and the surrealists. Wollen's dream is to reunite these two avant-gardes; to bring together a concern with the endless formal possibilities of the cinema with a commitment to a political audience which would entail a concern with meaning as well as form. It is not, therefore, surprising that Godard emerges as a constant reference point throughout the book. More surprising, because less well known, is the Mexican painter of the 1930s, Frida Kahlo, and the photographer Tina Modotti, who function as Wollen's other main examples of an illuminating conjunction of politics and form.

The collection turns around an attempt to revive the lost possibilities of the 1920s, bringing together Brecht and the Russian formalists on the one hand and the surrealists on the other. But the attempt seems curiously doomed, a nostalgic longing for an artistic golden age when the romantic dream of the artist legislating reality seemed possible (if only in retrospect). Wollen never simply submits to such nostalgia and in a postscript on the 1970s, he very carefully distances himself from an ultra-left collapsing of levels of analysis which

goes together with an unwarranted privileging of the modernist moments of the 1920s. Such was *Tel Quel*'s position in the early 1970s, such threatened to become *Screen*'s position throughout the decade. But if Wollen's work remains admirably multi-layered, working now within a formal perspective, now historically, now psychoanalytically, the dream of some final articulation of these levels animates much of the collection and surfaces insistently in the fictions.

The problem of such a dream is that it seems to entail an analysis of culture which presupposes that paying sufficient attention to form and politics will yield a revolutionary art. Wollen never falls into such simplism himself but it does surface as two related problems in the book. He is consistently revealing about form and his analysis of the politics of the 1920s and 30s is always suggestive, yet there is no detailed attempt to deal with the relation between popular forms and the avant-garde, and no attempt at all to deal with the political situation of the 1960s and 70s. The postscript, which reviews the 1970s, makes some fertile suggestions for a new analysis of high and low culture,

recast in terms of dominance and resistance, but these suggestions remain too insubstantial for the importance Wollen attaches to them.

Readings and Writings ends with an appeal to the two presiding geni of Wollen's writings: Breton and Brecht, but this very appeal serves curiously to reveal the book's limitations. If its strengths come from the attempts to work through some of Brecht's and Breton's programmes in the light of contemporary artistic development and the possibilities of formal analysis, the weakness lies in a total disengagement from the politics of the past thirty years. Much of the analysis would seem to assume a never specified version of Leninism, but if such an assumption may be useful when examining the 1920s and 30s, it becomes ludicrously inappropriate in the present. Neither *Bananas* nor *Screen* were journals of a left political party, they both received a varying degree of government subvention through different funding bodies. Such ironies, if ironies they be, would need to be taken seriously if this book were to live up to its true potential. Even so it remains the best collection of writings on politics and art to have emerged for a decade.

The heights of low-life

James Kirkup

AUDIE E. BOCK
Mikio Naruse: Un maître du cinéma japonais
270pp. Locarno: Éditions du Festival International du Film.

Audie E. Bock, the author of the excellent *Japanese Film Directors* (Kodansha International) and the gifted translator of Kurosawa's *Something Like an Autobiography*, has now produced this invaluable work on a great master who seemed doomed to oblivion and neglect. Mikio Naruse's career, from 1930 to 1967, covers much of the period in which Japanese film history was made. Like his contemporaries, Naruse rejected facile approaches to the poetic realism of his themes, and the conventional "happy end" of popular movies was not for him. In the films of Ozu, humanity retains a certain dignity and grace, but Naruse, born into the *shitamachi* or low-life districts of Tokyo, showed their inhabitants in all their petty, mercenary selfishness and their sordid strategies of infatuation and marriage, well brought out in those films recently shown in Paris and London, *Late Chrysanthemums* and *Floating Clouds* (*Bangiku and Ukigumo*). Both of these masterpieces had scenarios derived from the novels of a popular woman writer, Fumiko Hayashi (1903-1951) whom Naruse never met, but for whose work he developed a great enthusiasm as early as 1934, and determined to bring to the screen. This did not happen until the 1950s, when he

had achieved a certain independence, and he was able to film a series of Hayashi's works, including her autobiography, *Hôrôki* (A Wanderer's Notebook). Her pictures of working-class life were the perfect literary equivalent of Naruse's screen images.

Naruse also directed films taken from the works of Yasunari Kawabata, but somehow they do not quite succeed, and only Komako, the geisha in *Snow Country*, is a truly realized Naruse character. Nevertheless, one of his favourite productions was that of Kawabata's late work, *Yama no Oto* (Sound of the Mountain) in 1954. Naruse was frankly disappointed with his working of an earlier Kawabata story, *Mothme* (Dancing Girl).

Like many directors today, Naruse used the same actors and actresses again and again in his films, thus giving their disparate subjects the sort of unity of characterization we find in the best repertoire theatre, or in the work of Fassbinder. He helped to make some of his actresses stars, just as Ozu did – part of the success of their movies was due to subtle casting of women like Mikiyo Okada, Hideko Takamine, Setsuko Hara, Haruko Sugimura and Kinuyo Tanaka, the long-suffering mother of post-war Japan in *Okusan*.

Ms Bock gives production notes, cast lists, running times, and information about original negatives (so often lost), as well as details about availability of scenarios, copies of which were generally not preserved. Each of Naruse's films is analysed with reference to his personal style and intentions, and the some-

times meandering plots are clearly outlined. There are frequent very illuminating quotations from the critics of contemporary Japanese film magazines like *Kinema jumpô* and *Elgin hyôron*. There is a bibliography of Japanese periodicals and monographs, and a rather summary selection of works in English and French.

The illustrations are numerous; there is a still from nearly all Naruse's eighty-seven films, and there are a few of Naruse himself. The final photograph in the book shows us the ailing master with his eternal cigarette, sipping scotch, during the filming of *Ukigumo*. Under the prosaic tribby, the plain, round face, illuminated by the full, sensitive mouth and the shy yet penetrating eyes, might be one from his own gallery of mature actors who knew so well, under Naruse's direction, how to portray ordinary men. Two years later, Naruse died of cancer, in 1969, at the age of sixty-four, when he might still have been expected to produce major works, if the deteriorating climate of film production in Japan had allowed him to do so. We look forward eagerly to a biography of this Japanese genius whose very ordinariness was something remarkable.

The latest volume (26) in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* series has recently been published. *American Screenwriters* (382pp. Gale Research Company. 0 8103 0917 3) contains studies of the careers of sixty-five significant film writers – a representative sample of the hundreds of writers who have worked in Hollywood over the years.

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Recent sales: musical and other manuscripts

Sarah Bradford

Serge Lifar is the last survivor of the *premiers danseurs* of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, and the sale at Sotheby's London on May 9 of part of his collection of ballet material and manuscripts was an evocation of those years of dazzling and talented performances, orchestrated with genius by Serge Diaghilev.

Among the musical items in the sale a manuscript of Debussy's *Jeux* was the most highly prized. An early version of the complete ballet extensively annotated by Debussy and Nijinsky, with contributions by Diaghilev, it was in fact the working score used by the trio as they evolved the ballet, with Diaghilev acting as mediator in the sharp disagreements between composer and choreographer (£82,500 to F. Koch). There was, too, Diaghilev's own notebook containing his plans for projects, realized and unrealized, in his last years, a poignant and interesting object with its front cover inscribed by Lifar, "The Diary of S. P. Diaghilev". On 19 August S. P. Diaghilev died in my presence at Venice... in the Grand Hôtel des Bains, Serge Lifar, 1929" (£42,000 to "White"). The same pseudonymous buyer acquired Diaghilev's music library, a fascinating collection of some eight hundred items - printed music, music manuscripts and books, libretti, pamphlets and programmes - many of them annotated by Diaghilev for whom the collection was not only a source of private pleasure but also of material for his productions and thus a key aspect of his work (£57,200 to "White"). The sale included, too, some remarkable letters by composers: a typed letter signed by Prokofiev to Diaghilev concerning *Love for Three Oranges*, *The Gambler*, *L'Enfant Prodigue*, Shostakovich and the state of Soviet music, more than doubled its estimate, selling for £7,700 again to "White", while an autograph letter by the same composer to Walter Nuvel on the death of Diaghilev made £6,820 (to "Dancer") and another by Prokofiev to Diaghilev about *Ala and Lolly and Chout* was acquired for £4,400 by "White". A letter from Ravel to Diaghilev promising to compose another work for the Ballets Russes was sold for £4,400 to F. Koch, who also paid £5,280 for a letter by Stravinsky to Lord Berners ("mon cher Tyrwitt") about Diaghilev. Estimates generally were high, indicative of the value placed by the owner on his collection: they were matched by the prices which collectors were prepared to pay for musical ballet material, of which perhaps the

most surprising was the £33,000 paid by F. Koch for a manuscript of *Parade*, the piano score of Erik Satie's music for the ballet, annotated by Cocteau and in some places by Massine. This first "Cubist" ballet had been billed as revolutionary, having the collaboration of such avant-garde figures as Picasso, Cocteau and Satie, but turned out to be less shocking than had been feared (or hoped) - Cocteau reported overhearing a woman in the audience saying, "If I had known it would be like this I should have brought the children..."

Musical manuscripts were also the star lots of Sotheby's Sale of Music and Continental Books, Autograph Letters and Manuscripts on May 10. The appearance of an important Mahler manuscript is an event: here was an unknown early manuscript of the First Symphony in D major ("The Titan"), of which twenty-one pages are entirely in Mahler's hand, the remainder of the 206 pages being in that of his amanuensis, F. Weidig, but extensively annotated and in some cases completely revised by the composer himself. It is, the catalogue declared, "the major and only manuscript source for the second four-movement version of Mahler's First Symphony", an illustration both of Mahler's progress on the symphony and of his working methods at a crucial stage in his artistic development. The original autograph manuscript of the symphony was sold for £2,700 in 1959; this version was acquired for £143,000 by an anonymous buyer. It formed part of a good Mahler collection including two autograph letters and eleven manuscript songs with performance instructions and annotations by the composer, several of which were purchased by the Austrian National Library.

This sale also featured an important Wagner manuscript, the first autograph poetical draft of the libretto for "Siegfried's Tod", thirty-nine pages written between November 12 and 28, 1848. The text was later completely revised for *Götterdämmerung*, and the catalogue comments that it was probably the difficulty Wagner found in accommodating the scope of the action in the libretto for "Siegfried's Tod" that led him to write another text, "Der junge Siegfried", and eventually the complete *Ring* (£63,800 to Koch). Another interesting Wagner manuscript, the complete cello part, in the composer's hand, for the "Columbus Overture", represents one of only three autograph sources for the overture (of which no complete autograph manuscript exists). It was sold for £19,800, while F. Koch paid £3,300 for a diverting autograph letter by the compos-

er in which Wagner attributes the disastrous reception of *Tannhäuser* in Paris to the boisterous antagonism of "les puissants membres du Jokey-Club [sic] qui, pour empêcher une longue série de représentations d'un Opéra sans ballet au deuxième Acte, ont sufflé et ont fait siffler par leurs domestiques ma musique..."

Proust in general rather liked the Jokey Club, but over the Dreyfus affair he had the courage to take up a position utterly opposed to that of most of its "puissants membres". He prided himself on being the first "Dreyfusard" and many of the fifteen long letters featured in the sale, which he wrote to his mother from Evian in September 1899, were concerned with the trial. Comprising 129 pages and sold as one lot, this was the last considerable collection of Proust's letters to his mother likely to appear; they were acquired by F. Koch for £30,800. The same price was paid by Benda for the autograph manuscript of Goethe's poem on the skull of Schiller, written on the occasion of the exhumation of the skull in 1826 for the somewhat Gothic purpose of decorating the pedestal of Dannecke's bust of Schiller in the ducal library at Weimar. Goethe later succeeded in obtaining his friend's skull and keeping it in his own house for some time before its final reinterment.

An out-of-the-ordinary letter by Karl Marx fetched an extraordinary price, £24,200 to Pickering and Chatto. According to Professor Chimen Abramsky (co-author with Henry Collins of *Karl Marx and the British Labour Movement*, 1965) the importance of the letter is that it is the first and only document listing all the publications of the International - which were all written anonymously by Marx himself. The letter, dated July 12, 1871, from Haverstock Hill, is addressed to A. O. Rushton, private secretary to H. A. Bruce, Gladstone's Home Secretary, in reply to his request for such a list. Contrary to the suggestions of Sotheby's catalogue, Marx was not "entering into secret correspondence with his enemy" but was in fact eager to distinguish the genuine publications of the International from those which were all too readily attributed to it. He was concerned to preserve the existence of the International in England against the threat posed by the French Government, which had requested the British to suppress it. On perusal of Marx's words Gladstone's Liberal Government decided they had no grounds for such repression and refused the French request; it was a crucial moment in the movement's history.

together; and why, then, in the South?

It is the fundamental defect of this interesting and, in many ways, valuable book, that Mr. Dabney nowhere gives a diagnosis of the Southern disease; and for want of that his descriptions of the doctors and their remedies lack a background which will make them intelligible to the foreigner. Mr. Dabney knows, of course, that slavery and its attendant problems is the root of this evil and says so here and there, but nowhere is it set down systematically. If the South, which had been a leader on the Liberal side during the American Revolution, a light to the darkness of Massachusetts and Connecticut, became, even before Jefferson was dead, a stronghold of Conservatism, of a morbid fear of criticism which passed for loyalty to "one's State and section," and of an extravagant indulgence in self-pity and self-pride, slavery was the cause, slavery and all its accompanying evils of hate and fear. The older generation of Southerners who bewailed the evils of slavery had none more terrible to bewail than this. So the first half of Mr. Dabney's book is a depressing story of the prison gates closing round the South; till the great collapse of the Civil War.

The second part of this study is, naturally, a more cheerful piece of reading than the first. It is full enough of horrors and of absurdities; and Mr. Dabney displays a grim humour in his citations from Southern leaders, ranging from that otherwise Liberal journal which attacked Mr. Laurence Stallard for referring to a Negro man of letters as "Mr. N." to the famous utterance of Senator Cole Blease in defence of lyn-

ching. "Whenever the constitution comes between me and the virtue of the white woman of the South, I say to hell with the constitution!" No one at this time of day will indulge in political criticism of the South; but it is no use pretending that there are not things in this book which startle the European; however anxious he may be to discuss these problems with understanding and sympathy. When Mr. Dabney describes that school of thought which was anxious for racial integrity, Negro as well as White, that "they are willing to make the best of the present unsatisfactory conditions," that is, the poor enforcement of the "Jim Crow" laws; it is to be hoped that he sees the height of this attitude! He is rightly proud of the great university which has published his book, and quotes Professor Laski's deserved tribute to it, but with all the admiration which the University of North Carolina has earned from all competent observers, the description of what it has done for the Negro seems to ignore the fact that, in theory, it is a State university open to all citizens of the State.

No one who reads this book will accuse Mr. Dabney of lack of courage; for his condemnations are never vague, and whether their object is a man or an institution, the name is given - and the facts. His criticism of the Southern case is open and brave - but when he goes on to assume that, if the seven Negroes are proved guilty, no one can object to their execution, he reveals a state of mind that is probably confined to the South; but while the black shadow lies across the South, it is perhaps ungrateful to criticize the fighters for light.

Letters

'A New Mimesis'

Sir, - May I defend A. D. Nuttall's *A New Mimesis* against Terence Hawkes's attack (May 11), for two reasons. The first is particular. Those who have not read Nuttall's first two chapters should be told that, to one reader at least, they do not contain "tetchy hostility" to Post-Structuralism, and do not misconceive the position they attack, but are a scrupulous and sophisticated discussion of the relation of language to reality, and of the self-defeating elements in Derridian scepticism (including a very careful analysis of a passage from Hawkes).

The second, more general, reason concerns Hawkes's own position, that the text of Shakespeare is the site of struggles, "able to be drawn upon to support numbers of... positions, and thus an important arena in which alternative readings will always compete". The history of the criticism and interpretation of Shakespeare is a fascinating study, and of course it teaches us a good deal about competing ideologies; but if I have understood Hawkes correctly, he believes that it is the *only* legitimate object of study for Shakespeare critics. If texts show a complete "absence of uniformity or coherence" then it is meaningless to ask whether they can or can't mean what an interpreter claims. This would take us from the Scylla of naive dogmatism (this is what it means and nothing else) to the Charybdis of naive scepticism (any text can mean anything). Nuttall does not maintain that language is "a transparent medium giving access to a reality 'beyond' it in a direct, objective or immediate fashion"; but he does believe that language gives indirect access to a reality that is partly non-linguistic. It is not clear to me if Hawkes would deny this or not.

I suggest that it is of the nature of literary meaning that it is receptive in interesting ways to changing interpretation, and a shrewd history of Shakespeare's interpretation should explore the continuities as well as the changes, and the difference between mere distortion and (for instance) the application of a general point to fresh instances. The professor of English at Oxford in 1918 clearly had odd and probably distasteful views about the Germans, but that in principle distinguishable from the question of how defensible his interpretation of *The Tempest* was.

If all (not only literary) texts are "open to competing readings" as Hawkes claims, then he has set up an infinite regress. If we cannot know what Shakespeare means, only what he has been held to mean, then we cannot know what Shakespeare's interpreters mean - their critical texts can also become "sites" of struggle. Hawkes cannot know what Nuttall means, and I cannot know what Hawkes means. The only way to arrest this slide is to maintain that a text can mean some things, and cannot mean others; unpacking that statement is of course a more complex and rewarding process in the case of Shakespeare than in the case of Nuttall, or Hawkes, or LAURENCE LERNER, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, Sussex.

'Aristotle to Zoos'

Sir, - F. A. Hayek (Letters, April 20) misses the point of James G. Lennox's criticism (Letters, March 30) of Peter Medawar's and Richard Dawkins's ignorant dismissal of Aristotle's biology.

Of course Aristotle didn't believe in evolution: since when have we thought that either the materials or the results of Darwin's great work were available to the Greeks? Professor Hayek's oversimplifications of Aristotle's ethics (could anyone who has read the *Nicomachean Ethics* speak of "his belief that only that was moral which was necessary to maintain the existing population"? and political economics is less to the point of the value of Aristotle's biology than his incredible conclusion "that Aristotle thought in purely stationary terms" - incredible in the light of Aristotle's biology.

(As a small aside, is it not time we stopped thinking that advocates of predecessor theory A hold back the world from better successor theory B? shall we put forth no theories until guaranteed they will need no better successors?)

The issue is the value of Aristotle's biology, as both a contribution to "the growth of biological thought" and as an aid in our understanding of Aristotle's metaphysics and philosophy of science. On the first score allow me, too, to quote from Ernst Mayr, who, unlike Medawar and Dawkins, has read the recent work of Aristotelian scholars on the biology: No one prior to Darwin has made a greater contribution to our understanding of the living world than Aristotle (384-322 bc). His knowledge of biological matters was vast... In almost any portion of the history of biology one has to start with Aristotle. He was the first to distinguish various of the disciplines and to devote to them monographic treatments... He was the first to discover the great heuristic value of comparison and is rightly celebrated as the founder of the comparative method... Aristotle's outstanding characteristic was that he searched for causes. He was not satisfied merely to ask how questions, but was amazingly modern by asking why questions... Aristotle has received full recognition for his pioneering thoughts only within recent decades.

(*Growth of Biological Thought*, pp 87-9)

"Tiresome farrago"? Alas, the recognition is not yet full.

Lennox and I are editing for Cambridge University Press a collection of essays on philosophical issues in Aristotle's biology, so are perhaps not unbiased observers. But we are observers: we've read the biological treatises and we find them, as Ernst Mayr does, biologically and philosophically exciting. Our own work is primarily on the philosophical lessons of the biology, and less on its contribution to the history of biological thought. The consensus of our volume's contributors, and of all of us who've been studying Aristotle's biology these days, is that they have astonishingly much to teach us about Aristotle's philosophical thought, in metaphysics and philosophy of science among other areas. But readers of the *TLS* might delve into his biological works just for the sheer joy of a brilliant mind, ordering, clarifying and offering scientific explanations of a vast sea of carefully collected and sifted data - a mind clearly in love with the biological world. And they would do best simply to ignore the prattlings of people like Messrs Medawar and Dawkins, people who, one might say, have small Greek and less Aristotle. ALLAN GOTTHELF, Wolfson College, Oxford.

Children's Literature

Sir, - To answer two of the points raised by Hugh Brogan in his review of *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (May 4): There already is a reference book for children about their books - Margery Fisher's excellent *Who's Who in Children's Books* (1975) - which gives plot summaries and character sketches and makes no reference at all to tedious matters like chapbooks, primers, catechisms, hornbooks and eighteenth-century booksellers whose presence in the *OCCL* Hugh Brogan laments.

In reply to his plaintive remark about the apparent Protestant nature of so many of the books included - "Is there no identifiable Catholic tradition?" - the answer is no, there is not and never has been. All the famous evangelical fiction of the last century in both England and America was Protestant - works like *Jessie's First Prayer*, *A Peep behind the Scenes*, *Froggy's Little Brother*, and *The Wide, Wide World*. Protestants, though initially they had outlawed fiction as "lies" and therefore hellworthy, used it eventually as a net to catch their fish, and thereby influenced the history of publishing for at least half a century. Catholics, though they had never denounced fiction, did not use it for evangelizing, and writers in the Anglican High Church tradition such as Charlotte Yonge and Elizabeth Sewall had a very limited readership compared to the worldwide following of "Hesba Stretton" and "Elizabeth Wetherell" (Alexander II ordered a copy of *Jessie's First Prayer* to be placed in every Russian school). In 1836 Newman wrote filipically to a would-be writer of Tractarian religious tales: "I am sure we shall do nothing till we get some ladies to work to poison the rising generation." But the output of these ladies was meagre indeed compared to their Protestant contemporaries.

GILLIAN AVERY, 52 Chalfont Road, Oxford.

'Revolution in Time'

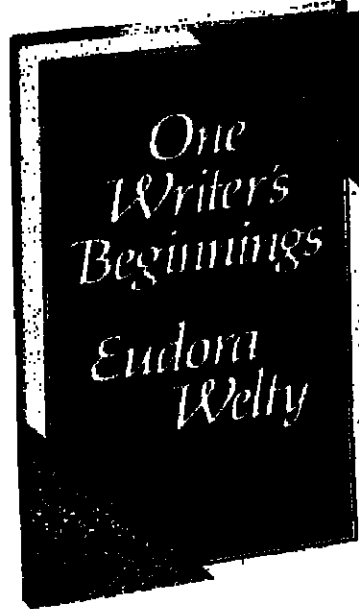
Sir, - Problems of origins have a way of engendering conflict that is not exactly head-on. I find it easy to agree with much in Dr Landes's letter (May 18). I too have argued, if not for "the monastic origin of the mechanical clock", at least for a very strong monastic involvement in its evolution. I too have disagreed with some of the details of the late Derek Price's account of the matter. There is not much to be said for making the present discussion triangular; at least we are agreed that "Price was convinced that the first use of a mechanical escapement was in an astronomical device and derived its inspiration from astronomical needs". Dr Landes thinks he was wrong. I think he was probably right in this limited respect.

Of the proposition in question, coupling it with several others, Landes writes: "The facts simply contradict this." The trouble is that there are no facts with a direct bearing on the case. Someone, somewhere, perhaps in the mid-1270s, invented the first purely mechanical escapement. We do, as it happens, have the testimony of two writers, Roger Bacon in 1267 and Robertus Anglicus in 1271, that astronomers were then concerning themselves with the problem of producing a steady mechanical drive for their models, and without success, to judge by their silence on this score. We know that whether they or others found the solution, it was seized upon for the regulation of the Church's day, that it was grafted on to an existing technology, that it might have been the result of someone's trying to improve a monastic alarm, but that even if produced within monastery walls it might well have been first meant to control an astronomical device, a model of the universe. That I incline to this last option does not imply any inconsistency with Landes's three quotations from my writings - and, for the record, I have not changed my mind. I wish there were evidence enough to allow me to do so.

What was the spur to the invention? I insist that it is begging the question to write that "the clock made possible automated astraria/planetaria rather than the reverse", since the word "clock" here can be understood in two ways, and most readers will take it to refer simply to the driving mechanism of the total machine, which reduces the statement to a tautology, without realizing that it is put forward by someone canvassing for a particular thesis about the sequence of invention. As I think I said in my review, scholastic attitudes to time were such that for many it would have been another tautology to have referred to an automated model of the universe as a timekeeper; but that is not the present point at issue.

On the question of my scepticism over "something new" having arrived with the introduction of the word "clock", Landes's letter leaves me as puzzled as ever. I assumed that he meant the medieval Latin "cloc" (or something like it), with its new and extended meaning, that is, not just referring to a bell. Surely the earliest occurrences of this word, as far as are known, are more than half a century after the generally accepted date for the invention of the mechanical escapement. If, on the other hand, Landes means the Latin word "horologium", the statement is completely indefensible, since the word is ambiguous as between all types of timekeeping device, whether sundial, water clock, mechanical clock, or sandglass.

As to the question of degeneration, I do not recall having said that Derek Price "took refuge" in paradoxical utterances. He rejoiced in them. There's nothing like a good paradox for getting yourself quoted, and what better way of getting your thesis remembered? "It is the inversion of the normal sequence of invention, from rudimentary to sophisticated", writes Landes, "that requires such lawyerly acrobatics [as North's]". The first half of the sentence, at least, shows that he sees the paradox I had in mind when speaking of Price's thesis: we expect clocks (in a very general sense) to get more and more sophisticated, whereas through the manufacture of increasing numbers of simple bell-ringing devices (clocks proper, without even a dial in most cases) the opposite seems to have taken place. The clock, seen by Price as "a degenerate branch from the main stem of mechanized astronomical devices", is not really so paradoxical after all. My own point about



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-Los Angeles Times Book Review

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a gentle, reflective book, full of insights into the nature of memory."

-Daily Telegraph

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-The New Yorker

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Letters

degeneration was more involved. It was that there are no easy concepts of technological degeneration and progression, and that in a culture with a relatively small and scattered assortment of people working on such devices as we are discussing, it is certainly not possible to pretend that there is a single-line graph climbing steadily upwards. There will be progress in some centres and decline in others. One does not become a lawyer by merely entertaining suspicions that there is no such thing as "the normal sequence of invention", or an acrobat by trying to describe the cavortings of history.

On the point about Protestantism and clock-making, Dr Landes convinced me all along that there is an important correlation, and Augsburg is a wonderful test-case. I should feel happier if there were comparable studies of other centres (Prague, Vienna, Munich, and so on) so that we might put more detail into the correlation, and into generalizations based on it, and perhaps as a result learn still more about the underlying reasons.

JOHN NORTH.
Centrale Interfaculteit, Rijksuniversiteit, Groningen, The Netherlands.

'Sir John Did His Duty'

Sir, - Your reviewer of *Sir John Did His Duty* (April 20) offers an eager and colonial nod of approval to the author, Sir Garfield Barwick. Sir John Kerr's conduct is depicted as that of a knight in shining armour, accompanied by his trusty squire Sir Garfield, come to rescue Australia from the wickedness of the Whitlam government, equipped though that administration was with a comfortable majority in the people's House, won in 1972 and reaffirmed in 1974, all of the people voting on the basis of one value, one vote.

In order to redress the imbalance of your reviewer's assumptions and uncritical acceptance of Barwick's apologia, it is to be noted that the Whitlam government was systematically and

deliberately frustrated by the irresponsible conduct of the Senate, elected as it was (and is) on a profoundly undemocratic basis, at a different time from the House of Representatives and with a hairsbreadth anti-Labor majority. Principal agent in this disgraceful transaction was the Premier of Queensland (himself in power by a spectacular gerrymander) who, contrary to all precedent, filled a casual vacancy in the Senate with a hostile man.

An administration judged unpopular by the Opposition was removed by an unelected and literally irresponsible Governor-General who communicated with a Chief Justice (Sir Garfield) who had earlier been a leading political opponent of Whitlam's, and who installed the leader of that Opposition as the willing "caretaker" Prime Minister for the purpose of a general election. This might be Sir Garfield's and your reviewer's idea of responsible government, but it is not mine.

Your reviewer might at least have explored Sir Garfield's astonishing notion that the dismissal of a government with a majority in the popular House can be justified by the verdict of a subsequent election held on other issues. Sir Garfield and your reviewer lay great stress on the importance of such a test of public judgment. If the people had not voted against Labor in 1975, presumably Sir Garfield would have agreed to reverse the Governor-General's action, remove Mr Fraser from his caretaker position, remove the Governor-General and reinstate Mr Whitlam. Sir Garfield's justification by subsequent election is nonsense, of course.

Your readers will not be surprised to learn that eminently qualified legal opinion here disagrees utterly with Barwick's analysis and apologia. No one would think so from your reviewer's piece, completely lacking historical context as it does.

In 1975, Supply had not run out and the people supported Whitlam's stand against the intransigent Senate, as public opinion polls revealed. Kerr had no business shoving in his

oar. One shudders to think what such a man and his advisers would have tried to do had there actually been a crisis.

Sir Garfield Barwick and your reviewer are in error to place the guilt for the conflict with Whitlam. The guilty men who stand condemned in the eyes of history are the Liberal Country party members in the Senate and their cronies, especially the philistine hillbilly politicians of Queensland who found it impossible to believe that they had been voted out of the spoils of office not once but twice, and were, incredibly, not born to rule at all.

L. L. ROBSON.
Department of History, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, Australia.

Georg Trakl

Sir, - In your April 27 issue on poetry Michael Hofmann refers to Georg Trakl as a poet with typically German qualities. Trakl was as little a German as, amongst others in this century, Hofmannsthal, Rilke, Kafka, Schmitzler, Musil, Handke, who are constantly claimed to be "German" writers when, in fact, they are Austrian.

Trakl's poetry reflects in the dark beauty of its imagery not only a Freudian death wish but at the same time the decay of the Habsburg Empire, the idea that all beauty is transitory and that even "the living dead" are doomed, a fatalism which is endemic in Austrian literature. I find also strange that Mr Hofmann should define Trakl's speech as "cold, undelighting, unhuman", his vocabulary as "poisoned" - which shows that he misreads him or, at least, sees only one side of Trakl's poetry. His verse is, admittedly, difficult to translate but English readers should not be discouraged by unsatisfactory translations, let alone negative criticism.

GABRIELLE SCHALLENBERG.
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AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 175

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send in answers so that they reach this office not later than June 15. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that, most nearly correct - in which case invited guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author, Author 175" on an envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, 51 John Lane, London WC1M 4BX. The solution and result will appear on June 22.

1 "That English lady in the cars", she said, "the Featherstone - asked me if we didn't all live in hotels in America. I told her I had never been in so many hotels in my life as since I came to Europe. I have never seen so many - it's nothing but hotels." She declared that the hotels were very good, and once you got used to their ways, and that Europe was perfectly sweet.

2 There is an Athenaeum, and a State Hall, and a fashionable street . . . Excellent houses there are and large churches and enormous hotels; but of things as these a man can write nothing that is worth the reading. The traveller who desires to tell the experience of America must write of people rather than of things.

3 Mightier than Egypt's tombs, Fairer than Grecia's, Roma's temples, Prouder than Milan's statues, spired cathedrals, More picturesque than Rhenish castle-keeps, We plan even now to raise, beyond them all, Thy great cathedral scared industry, no tomb, A keep for life for practical invention.

Competition No 170

No correct answers were received.

Answers:
1. Nay, 'tis all gone, now! Diah 'tish phen toa is not to be phit call, Mashter Ofisher! That is a meat better to lishen out noises for tee and too art ka ower 'orld . . . tou art so bushy about beggenall, too hast no leishure to lishen shentlemen . . .
Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, 3, 1.
2. What wot I, or reck I that, whay guid man, Indus friend, nor ay reck no foe, all's ene to me, glin gangin, and trouble not may whayet, or sy's ye the reckon me none of they friend, by the mayrman sail I.
Robert Greene, *James IV*, induction.
3. All the water in Wye cannot wash your majesty's Welsh blood out of your body, I can tell you that.
Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 4, 7.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Baldick is the author of *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932*, 1973.
John Barnard is the editor of *John Keats: The Complete Poems*, 1973.
Jonathan Barnes is a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford.
Alan Bell is librarian of Rhodes House, Oxford.
T. J. Binyon is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.
Hugh Brogan's *The Life of Arthur Ransome* was published earlier this year.
P. A. Brunt is Camden Professor of Ancient History at the University of Oxford.
Lord Carver's *The Seven Ages of the British Army* is published this month.
J. M. Cocking is Emeritus Professor of French at King's College, London.
Filippo Donini was formerly Director of the Italian Institute in London.
Edmund Fawcett was Washington correspondent of *The Economist* from 1976 to 1983.
Peter Fawcett is a lecturer in French at the University of Leicester.
Stephen Fender is the literary editor of the *Journal of American Studies*.
Lawrence Freedman is Professor of War Studies at King's College, London.
G. L. Huxley is Honorary Research Associate at the School of Classics, Trinity College, Dublin.
R. Jeffrey-Jones is the author of *American Espionage: From secret service to CIA*, 1978.
Paul Kennedy's *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870-1945* was published last year.
Hugh Kenner is the author of *Modern Irish Writers*, which appeared last year.
James Kirkup's translation of Camara Laye's *The Guardian of the World* was published in 1981.
Christopher Lasch's *The Minimal Self: Psychic survival in troubled times* will be published later this year.
Sir John Lawrence was the Editor of *Frontier*, 1957-75.
David Lehman is the editor of *Beyond Amusement: New essays on John Ashbery*, 1980.
David Lodge's most recent novel is *Small World: An academic romance*, 1984.
Colin MacCabe's books include *Revolution of the Word*, 1979.
Iain MacGillivray is the author of *Against Criticism*, 1982.
Geoffrey Marshall's *Constitutional Conventions* was published earlier this year.
Peter Marshall is Professor of American Studies at the University of Manchester.
Wilfrid Mellers is the author of *Beethoven and the Voice of God*, 1983.
Sir Oliver Miller is Surveyor of the Queen's pictures.
E. J. Mishan's books include *The Economic Growth Debate*, 1977.
Karl F. Morrison is Professor of History at the University of Chicago.
H. G. Nicholas was Rhodes Professor of American History and Institutions at the University of Oxford, 1969-78.
Julia O'Farrell's novel *The Irish Signorina* will be published later this year.
P. J. Parish is Director of the Institute of United States Studies at the University of London.
Harold Perkin is currently Mellon Distinguished Visiting Professor of the Humanities at Rice University, Texas.
Harvey Pitcher is the author of *Chekhov's Leading Lady*, 1979.
Claude Rawson is the author of *Gulliver and the Gentle Reader: Studies in Swift and our times*, 1975.
W. R. Riddell's study of Queeney's *Zazie dans le Métro* was published in 1980.
Graham Reynolds's catalogue of the later paintings of John Constable will be published this autumn.
David Robey is a lecturer in Italian at the University of Oxford.
Robert Schiller is lecturer in History at the University of Cambridge.
Miranda Seymour is working on a life of Henry James.
R. B. Smith's first volume of *An International History of the Vietnam War* was published earlier this year.
Andrew Sinclair's books include *Jack: The biography of Jack London*, 1977.
Howard Temperley is Professor of American History at the University of East Anglia.
J. N. Woodhouse is a Fellow of St Cross College, Oxford.

COMMENTARY

Covering the ground

Frances Spalding

Henry Lamb
Manchester City Art Gallery until June 16.

Henry Lamb is a familiar yet shadowy figure within the history of twentieth-century British art. He appears in the biographies of others, occupying the centre stage for a period and then disappearing completely. We learn that he apprenticed himself to Augustus John and later befriended Stanley Spencer; that Lady Ottoline Morell and Lytton Strachey were infatuated with him; that he escaped Manchester to become an artist in London, grew side-whiskers and, as Strachey observed, "looked amazingly, though of course, very, very bad". But what of his art? Though his portraits receive praise, his work has never been assessed as a whole. Nothing has appeared on him in print since George Kennedy's short monograph of 1924. And the memorial exhibition held after his death in 1960 did not try to be comprehensive. In this retrospective, and in its generously illustrated catalogue (56pp. Manchester City Art Gallery, £2. 0 091673 22 6), Lamb's career for the first time lies exposed.

Almost every work in this exhibition is highly accomplished. Lamb was relentless in the pursuit of his ideas, worrying his compositions until every piece fell in place. Whether painting the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra or a gentle evocation of rooftops at Poole, he could detect an unexpected pattern, a subtle relationship between the parts and the whole. He used the landscape outside the window in his famous, large portrait of Lytton Strachey to suggest that his sitter is pinioned to his wicker chair by the weight of gravity; his lassitude mocked by the nearby tightly-rolled umbrella and mimicked by the drooping branches of one of the background trees. But Lamb's perfectionism, or his intransigence as Augustus John termed it, could also lead to tightness, to a slightly deadening fixity that leaves his wartime record of an "Advanced Dressing Station on the Struma" curiously mute.

Lamb had skill, intelligence, sensitivity but not apparently any desire to impress his personality on his art. His self-portrait painted in 1914 is disconcerting. The head, etched with startling clarity against a dark ground, betrays

only a tense reserve. That he should see so intensely and yet withhold so much suggests either an English love of understatement or a disconnection between heart and eye. When not painting portraits he produced a jumble of subjects - occasional landscapes, symbolist designs, arbitrary scenes from everyday life - making it hard to discern where his real interests lay. He emerges less interesting as an individual than as an artistic barometer. When warmed by friendship with another artist, or familiarity with a place, he shifted ground.

On arriving in London in 1905 he aligned himself with William Orpen and Augustus John, and therefore with a style of drawing associated with the Slade. Emphasis was on line and speed of execution. Lamb quickly became a virtuoso, as his drawing of Dorelia John reveals. More objective are the portrait heads of John Masefield and A. E. Housman. These too follow fashion, being "character sketches" of the kind used by publishers as frontispieces, William Rothenstein producing a great many for John Lane, Lamb working for Grant Richards.

In Brittany before the First World War Lamb turned Nabi, employing mosaic-like colour and high horizons to force up his backgrounds. Like other artists attracted to this area, he was impressed by peasant customs and by a piety born of hardship. He witnessed a family tragedy and afterwards painted "Death of a Peasant", 1911, in which a man, his face weather-beaten and wrinkled with grief, rests his forehead on his wife's, her face pallid and the eyes as yet unclosed. This is the only painting in the exhibition where emotional rather than formal requirements dominate the idea.

Lamb exercised greater control over the particulars of the scene in the group portraits that he painted in the early 1920s. Not surprisingly, since he was by then a close friend of Stanley Spencer, these pictures strain conventions with their insistent peculiarities. George Kennedy is shown hemmed in by wife and four children. Neither in this nor the studies for Lamb's portrait of the Anrep family is marital tension directly expressed, but the oblique, surreptitious wit is there. As in the Strachey portrait, Lamb has returned to familiar ground, his position at once ironic and detached.

Writers' rights

Nigel Cross

The Society of Authors Centenary

The Society of Authors was founded one hundred years ago and every improvement in the conditions of authorship since 1884 has owed something to its campaigning - from the Berne Convention of 1886, through the Copyright Acts of 1911 and 1956 to the introduction of Public Lending Right in 1979. Of course, this is no more than the authors who have paid their £50 subscriptions should demand from their representative body. These improvements have been reactions to increasingly complex business practices and do not necessarily amount to a great leap forward for the profession. For example, throughout the 1960s and 1970s the Society stressed that payments for books borrowed from public libraries was a right, not a bonus and the same point is made implicitly in the current, aptly-named campaign to secure a "Minimum Terms Agreement" from publishers, to which (with perfect timing) Faber and Faber have acceded.

The Society's next cause, which again is a question of simply keeping pace with technological developments, is the protection of literary property from unwitting or uncaring theft by photocopy and video cassette recorder. As the delivery of literature to its audience becomes more technical, so the individual writers become more dependent on professional representations.

Here the Society faces its greatest challenge. In the 1950s its conservative management committee was clearly not doing its job; and screen and television writers set up their own union

which became, in 1965, the Writers Guild of Great Britain. For a decade there was fierce rivalry, but by the end of the PLR campaign the Society and the Guild had acquired a degree of mutual respect. Now they have set up a joint sub-committee to consider a permanent rapprochement. Both sides have had to move cautiously as their respective management committees and members are far from unanimous about a merger. The objections seem mainly to be based on prejudice: the Guild was considered radical and militant, the Society gentlemanly, weak and staid. If either organization once deserved such a reputation, they do not now and the case for a union of unions is overwhelming. (It was well put by John Bowen in the spring issue of *The Author*.)

One important and timely initiative announced at the Society's centenary dinner is the establishment of an Authors' Foundation, set up by writers for writers as a fund for the sponsorship of individual literary works. It is not intended to help publishers out their advances but to help finance poorly remunerated, though deserving, writing. The grants, probably worth between £500 and £2000, will go to biographers, historians and other non-fiction writers of some standing. The Foundation - trustees Antonia Fraser and Michael Holroyd - has already raised £40,000 from authors. Publishers are next on the list. It is also considering tapping industry for sponsorship, a tactic that is bound to lead to embarrassment and controversy, whatever benefits it may bring to the author of, say, the Glenfiddich Life of Robert Burns. But experience shows that the necessary business of literary patronage is best undertaken by writers in charge of private funds.

Hoodwinking the hoodlums

Patricia Craig

EDGAR WALLACE
On The Spot
Albery Theatre

In the course of a trip to America in 1929, at the instigation of his publisher, Edgar Wallace snatched twenty-four hours in Chicago and spent the time ingurgitating the atmosphere of gangsterdom, badinage, bullet-holes and all. *On The Spot*, the play resulting from this colourful sojourn, was conceived and written at top speed. With Al Capone firmly in mind, Wallace invented a rampant racketeer called Tony Perrelli, installed him in an overdecorated apartment and caused various of his nefarious confederates to accost him there, one after the other.

The plot is elementary. In order to appease the aggrieved feelings of a rival bootlegger, whose sidekick he has had polished off, Perrelli undertakes to put his cat's-paws "on the spot" - that is, to sacrifice the pair of expendable killers in a tit-for-tat shooting. One of the doomed hoodlums, an inefficient young assassin whose heart isn't in it, is an object of sympathy to Perrelli's Japanese concubine Akiko. The other, older and bolder, has in tow a flashy mistress who immediately arouses Perrelli's acquisitiveness in the matter of women. We have, on the stage, some not very convincing displays of lust, an instinct that seems to be satisfied by a lunge or two at the nearest available bosom or thigh. As far as verisimilitude is concerned, the current production of *On The Spot* is not exactly spot on.

Not that Wallace would have wanted it otherwise. Far from bursting "with naked power and sexual passion", as the programme assures us, the play excludes such real emotions from its precincts and puts something infinitely factitious in their place. It has no

more dynamism or erotic drive than Desperate Dan. The popular author made sure of retaining the approval of his audience by larding the comic gangland toughness with a generous dollop of sentimentality. He may have noted the gunmen's tendency - in fiction at any rate - to express aggression in a series of high-class quips, but he didn't allow himself sufficient time to gain command of the fertile retort. *On The Spot* is full of inferior repartee. "I may be stupid, but I'm not dumb," one character remarks, with what point it's difficult to guess.

Simon Callow makes a suitably strident Perrelli, loud and lewd; and Sayo Inaba performs well as enigmatic Akiko, the endearing doormat. Edgar Wallace was apt to create characters with emphatic personalities, and James Warwick (quintessentially English in any case) seems a bit too muted in the role of Commissioner Kelly, the sole representative of the law-enforcement faction, to accord with the bump-tious spirit of the drama. Unlike those works which repay revival, *On The Spot* - first performed in 1930 - illuminates nothing about its own period or ours. Nothing but injudicious nostalgia can have prompted its reappearance.

The closing date for the Dylan Thomas Award, a cash prize of £1,000 made to a short-story writer, is July 27, 1984. Further information is available from Dylan Thomas Award, Poetry Society, 21 Earls Court Square, London SW5 9DE.

Ten awards intended to highlight the business community's support for the arts are administered by the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts and the *Daily Telegraph*. The 1984 categories include an award given to the arts organization which has made the most effective use of arts sponsorship. Applications should be submitted by August 17, 1984. Nomination forms are available from the Awards administrator, 2 Chester Street, London SW1X 7BB.

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Dryden and a poem for Lewis Maidwell

John Barnard and
Paul Hammond

The Brotherton Collection at the University of Leeds has acquired a seventeenth-century manuscript Latin grammar by Lewis Maidwell (1650-1715), schoolteacher, minor author and, later, educational projector. The manuscript is prefaced by two poems: the first, headed "To Mr. L. Maidwell on his new method" is signed "J. Dryden", and the second is by "N. Tate". The latter was printed with minor variants in Nahum Tate's *Poems Written on Several Occasions* (1684), but did not appear in the first edition of 1677. It is clearly authentic, and suggests that the manuscript was written between 1677 and 1684. Since "Dryden" was a contemporary spelling of "Dryden", the possibility that the author of the opening poem is John Dryden must be considered, even though the verses never appeared under his name during or after his lifetime, and seem to be otherwise unknown. If the poem is by him, it is the first addition to the canon of Dryden's poetry for a hundred years.

The manuscript is bound in contemporary calf, and was recently rebound. It measures 231 by 180mm, and is carefully written in a single hand, with some corrections. The inside front cover carries a nineteenth-century book-label of the Lowther family. The poems and grammar are written on thirty-seven out of thirty-eight leaves of a heavy paper, preceded and followed by blank endpapers. The watermark and countermark bear a very close resemblance to Heawood No 1787, a Dutch paper manufactured c 1680, and their distribution shows that the grammar was written on sheets which had first been cut in half, and then folded in two. Each page has a rectangular compartment neatly ruled in red, and the layout of the pages of the grammar is complicated, with larger and smaller writing used for emphasis, as well as ligatures. The writing is regular and clear: very occasionally an old-fashioned "g" appears, which suggests that the copyist was deliberately writing in a clear hand, while f 27^a contains an erasure and correction which looks authorial in origin. There are no marks of schoolroom use. All the signs point to an experienced copyist, possibly the author, creating a fair copy for presentation to the Lowther family, whose children were taught by Maidwell. The poems and grammar were probably written out and bound at some time between 1677 and 1684, a date nearer 1684 being the more likely. One other feature should be noted. In the margin of f 12^a is written, "[I]n this place [comes in] y^e Arbor Conjugan- / [d]i". The cropping here proves that binding was subsequent to writing, and the reference is to what appears to have been a favourite teaching device of Maidwell's; an elaborate tree of Latin conjugations, which was later engraved as a large folded plate for his *Nova Grammatica Experimenta* (1707). There are no signs that a manuscript version of this tree was part of the Brotherton manuscript.

Circumstantial evidence certainly links the names of Maidwell, Tate and Dryden. Maidwell was born in Cranford, Northamptonshire, a few miles from Dryden's village of Titchmarsh. After Westminster School, at which Dryden had been a pupil thirty years before, he matriculated in 1668 as a scholar at St John's College, Cambridge, where he served as amanuensis to the Master, Peter Guntinger, later Bishop of Ely. Maidwell graduated in 1672, and then spent five years as a tutor to the sons of Sir Stephen Fox, who in 1678 recommended him to the new Archbishop of Canterbury, William Sancroft. Maidwell's play, *The Loving Enemies* (1680), gives the first indication of a connection with Dryden: its prologue contains a reference to the Rose Alley assault upon the Poet Laureate in December 1679:

Who dares be witty now, and with just rage
Disturb the vice, and lollies of the Age?
With Knaves and Fools, Satyr's a dangerous fault,
They will not let you rub their sores with salt.
Else Rose-streets Ambuscade shall break your head.

Maidwell's next publication was a translation of Eutropius (1684), done by the boys who attended his private academy in Hatton Garden. The volume is dedicated "To his most Honoured Friend Sir John Lowther, Baronet".

and has two sets of verses, one by Tate "To the Ingenious Translators", the other in Latin, with the subscription "E. Trin. Coll. Cant." Each of the ten books is translated by one of Maidwell's pupils, who include two of Lowther's sons, Christopher (c 1666-1731, third baronet) and James (c 1673-1751, fourth baronet). In 1693 Dryden's Preface to *Juvenal* refers to Maidwell as "my Learned Friend", and thanks him for making a calculation in Roman chronology. Maidwell stirred up public debate in 1700 when he presented an ill-judged and grandiose scheme to Parliament for the establishment of an "Academy" for young men, based on continental models, which was to be located in his own London house and financed by giving the rector (Maidwell!) the power of imposing a tax on all printing in England. Maidwell subsequently published his eccentric *Nova Grammatica Experimenta*, which in fact lacked the grammar promised by

planations are possible. If the attribution to Dryden is wrong, it can only be wrong in one of three ways. First, it could be an erroneous ascription made in good faith. However, this manuscript is so close to its author, and so bound into the Lowther-Maidwell connection, that innocent error can be discounted. Second, the ascription could be deliberately fraudulent, in order to give Maidwell the status conferred by the Laureate's panegyric. But that would have been foolishly dangerous given the interrelations between Dryden, Maidwell and Tate: it would have been more sensible for the young and ambitious schoolmaster to use his connections, and the fact that both he and Dryden had been taught at Westminster by Richard Busby, to approach the older man for a poem. Third, "J. Dryden" could refer to another J. Dryden, but doubt about identity is only relevant when a context is lacking, as, for example, in an isolated government record. Here the context

To M^r. L. Maidwell on his new method.

Latine is now of equal use become
To Englishmen, as was the Greek to Rome:
It guides our language, nothing is express'd
Gracefull or true but by the Roman test.
Grammar's the base on which this world must stand,
Not to be laid by every Vulgar hand.
Let then our Reverend Master be ador'd
And all our grateful Penns his praise Record;
I dare not name my selfe, yet what I am
From his examples and his precepts came.
Our Noblest writs from his instructive care
Have grac'd the Senate and have judg'd the Bar;
But, above all, the Muses sacred Band
Have been transplanted from his Eden Land;
Nor thou the least, whose Judgment has refin'd
And mil'd that money which our Master coy'n'd
Grammar, which was before the ungratefull part
Of our green yeares, is made a pleasing Art;
Soe fil'd, so polish'd that no knots remaine,
Each Rule is usefull, each example plaine.
As reason then by language is express'd
(Converse distinguishing 'twixt man and beast),
Soe this thy Grammar makes the difference more
'Twixt man and man than man and beast before.
Nor is thy academy thus confin'd,
But as it teacheth words it moulds the mind.
Boyes by degrees are out of Nonage brought,
Nor Grammar only for its self is taught,
Design'd by thee not for the end, but way;
So artfully thou dost our youth convey
From step to step by thy judicious care
And cheat'st 'em into knowledge e're aware,
That at the last Historians they become
And know the deeds as well as words of Rome,
Which thou by sure Cronologie dost bind,
For that cements the story in the mind.
Thy modesty permits not more to say:
Ile imitate thy owne compendious way.
Praise is a course: the speediness of pace
And shortness of the turning winne the race.

J. Dryden

the title, but did include flattery of Queen Anne, Godolphin (whose sons he taught) and Samuel Garth, as well as a "paranetic" poem and preface by Tate. Maidwell published *An Essay upon the Necessity and Excellence of Education* also in 1707, and a Latin poem in praise of the Queen, *Majestas Imperii Britannici* (1706), which included a translation by Tate. There is, then, a lasting connection between Maidwell and Tate, and a clear link between Dryden and Maidwell: Dryden and Tate were closely associated in the early 1680s, and would make their collocation in the Brotherton manuscript unsurprising. In 1680, Dryden wrote a prologue for Tate's *The Loyal General*, and both men contributed to *Ovid's Epistles*. Two years later Tate wrote commendatory verses for *Abdolon and Achitophel* and *The Medal*, and collaborated with Dryden on *The Second Part of Abdolon and Achitophel*. In 1684 the two poems addressed to Dryden were reprinted by Tate in his *Essays*; and in the same year both poets contributed memorial verses to John Oldham's *Remains*.

The circumstantial evidence for the ascription of this prefatory poem to Dryden is thus very strong. Furthermore, erroneous ascriptions to Dryden in his lifetime are rare, unlike Rochester's, say, his name did not attract speculative attributions. Circumstantial evidence is, however, only circumstantial, and its strength depends upon whether alternative ex-

planations are possible. If the attribution to Dryden is wrong, it can only be wrong in one of three ways. First, it could be an erroneous ascription made in good faith. However, this manuscript is so close to its author, and so bound into the Lowther-Maidwell connection, that innocent error can be discounted. Second, the ascription could be deliberately fraudulent, in order to give Maidwell the status conferred by the Laureate's panegyric. But that would have been foolishly dangerous given the interrelations between Dryden, Maidwell and Tate: it would have been more sensible for the young and ambitious schoolmaster to use his connections, and the fact that both he and Dryden had been taught at Westminster by Richard Busby, to approach the older man for a poem. Third, "J. Dryden" could refer to another J. Dryden, but doubt about identity is only relevant when a context is lacking, as, for example, in an isolated government record. Here the context

points directly to the Poet Laureate. Moreover, only a poem by someone of Dryden's standing could help advance Maidwell's career, and any potential client who saw Dryden's name preceding Tate's would unhesitatingly assume that it was the poet himself. The writer's reference to their common schoolmaster shows that he, like Maidwell, was educated at Westminster under Busby. Dryden's son John (b 1668) and his cousin Jonathan (b 1639) were also at Westminster, but the son is too young and the cousin insufficiently distinguished. In short, the arguments for the ascription being innocently or fraudulently misleading, or referring to another Dryden, cannot be sustained. The poem is only useful if genuine: it appears with, and is given precedence over, a genuine poem by Tate, and it takes its place in a network of relationships between Maidwell, Tate and Dryden.

The internal evidence is, however, less clear-cut than the external. Although certainly written to praise Maidwell as the author of "this thy Grammar" (line 23), as well as his "Cronologie" (line 35) - in the translation of Eutropius - the panegyric is uneven, marked by indifferent passages and has apparent real resolutions. The opening ten lines fall into end-stopped couplets, are workaday and are not marked by Dryden's usual compressed imagery. On one occasion the poem's

metaphoric life is confused. The author introduces a conceit turning upon the refining of coining of gold, which claims that Maidwell has freshly minted what he and the writer have from Busby at Westminster (lines 15-16):

Nor thou [Maidwell] the least, whose Judgment has refin'd

And mil'd that money which our Master coy'n'd

Only corrupt coinage would be melted down, refined, cast and freshly "mil'd" (stamped) but the whole point is the purity of Busby's coin. On the other hand, Dryden's Prologue to *The Spanish Fryar* (1681) uses, though in different purposes, images of coining, "milling" and plants (lines 8-15, 23-24), all of which occur in this poem. There is another difficulty in line 25, "Nor is they academy thus confin'd". The apparently awkward scansion can be resolved by using the Greek stem ("academy"), common in this period and favoured by Busby, but the real difficulty is the hopeful approximation to logical development implied by "thus". The immediately preceding lines are concerned with the way in which grammatical analysis can lead to a fuller understanding of human conversation, which distinguishes man from beast. These large ideas do not suggest confinement. The temptation to propose that lines 25-26 should be transposed to follow line 20, an initially attractive emendation, only serves to underline the extent to which "then" in the next line also fails to carry its place: "As reason then by language is expressed . . .". The only conclusion can be that the poem's line of argument is not fully resolved.

The brevity of the last couplet, which compliments the compression of Maidwell's grammar by imitating it, seems an effort to end an indifferent poem with weight and point. The crucial question is whether this couplet, and the other good lines in the poem, are the work of a mediocre or unpractised writer. The condensation, and the ability to play the syntax against the conventional formal expectations of the couplet, are surely the result of experience.

The poem contains some words not used elsewhere by Dryden, but several of the most unusual words or phrases do occur in other works of his ("Eden Land", "transplanted", "green yeares", "distinguishing", "nonage", "cements", "turning . . . short"), and line 32 plays on the image which concludes the Preface to *Religio Laici* (1682): "A Man is to be cheated into Passion, but to be reason'd into Truth". "Compendious" (line 38) is used by Dryden in the Prologue to *The Duke of Guise* (1683), and there is an earlier and more significant occurrence in the second Prologue to *Secret Love* (1668), where the word is, as in the Maidwell poem, linked with "method". The verses, then, contain characteristic words and phrasing, as well as possible echoes of Dryden's work. There is also in line 24 a clear reference to Rochester's *Satire against Reason and Mankind* (c 1674) ("Man differs more from man, than man from beast"), a poem which Dryden echoed at the opening of *Religio Laici*. Finally, the poem's opening remarks on Latin as a standard for English, and on the need for grammar, relate to Dryden's letter to the Earl of Sunderland prefixed to *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), where he deplores the lack of a good English grammar, and says that when at a loss to decide whether what he writes is good English, he has "no other way to clear my doubts but by translating my English into Latin, and thereby trying what sense the words will bear in a more stable language". While not conclusive, this evidence, like all the circumstantial clues, points clearly towards Dryden's authorship.

The manuscript is lightly and erratically punctuated, a common feature of seventeenth-century manuscript copies of poems: the transcript printed here has changed and added punctuation in order to clarify the poem's meaning, but the following apparatus sets out the original forms:

2. Rome; Rome, 5 stand; stand 6 hand; hand 8 Record; Record, 9 selfe; selfe what 12 Bar; Bar, 13 But; But all; all Band Band 14 Land; Land 15 least; least 16 coy'd; coy'd 17 Grammar; Grammar 19 fil'd; fil'd remaine 20 usefull; usefull 22 beast; beast 24 before; before 26 mould'd; mould'd 27 brought; brought 28 fil'd; fil'd 29 taught; taught 32 cheat'st; aware; aware 34 Rome; Rome 35 bound; bound 37 and; and 38 course; course

Temporal considerations

Jonathan Barnes

RICHARD SORABJI

Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in antiquity and the early Middle Ages 473pp. Duckworth. £29.50. 07156 16935

"Zeus and Time existed always, and so did Earth." So Pherecydes of Syros, one of the forerunners of Greek philosophical thought. And the first of the great philosophers, Anaximander of Miletus, maintained that everything happened "according to the order of Time". Time stood at the beginning of Greek philosophy. At first a presupposition, it later became a puzzle and a source of paradox: and so time exercised the Greek thinkers for a thousand years. We, their successors, still debate the same issues; and although modern science - and modern science fiction - have added a few fantasies which the Greeks never dreamed of, today's problems and yesterday's are demonstrably continuous and mutually illuminating.

Time and the Greeks is the chief subject of Richard Sorabji's splendid new book. His heroes are Plato and Plotinus, Aristotle and Augustine, Philo and Plotinus, Damascius and Diodorus Cronus, and a hundred more. The train runs from Parmenides to Philoponus, and stops at all stations on the way. The topics include the reality of time; the "myth of passage"; time and change, and time and consciousness; eternity and timelessness; death; the beginning of time; continuity and time-atoms; and the question of when the 9.12 to Paddington really leaves Oxford.

That is not all. There are discussions of some of the Arab thinkers who inherited Greek thoughts and added to their inheritance. Various medieval figures, some renowned some obscure, make guest appearances. For Greek philosophy did not suddenly die in 529AD, and Professor Sorabji is concerned to demonstrate the perseverance of the philosophical tradition. Nor are the topics narrowly temporal. There are chapters on the mysticism of Plotinus, on Augustine's use of the *cogito*, on the discovery of occasionalism by the Islamic philosophers, on Aristotle's analysis of thinking, on the invention of idealism by Gregory of Nyssa. The canvas is vast, the picture animated, the painter nonpareil.

Sorabji proceeds by topic rather than by author, and the five main sections of the book deal successively with five main philosophical issues. The book's substance is composed of materials of three sorts: doxography, or the reporting of ancient views and arguments; exegesis, in which those reports are analysed and interpreted; and philosophy.

The philosophical patches may, I suspect, meet with some criticism. A few pages are shallow, and there is a scattering of odd remarks, eg "If Aristotle's view of infinity is finitist, I believe it will be perfectly adapted for some cases". But if Aristotle's view of infinity is finitist is not, then it is perfectly silly. Again, the philosophical arguments sometimes travel too fast. For example, Sorabji holds, contrary to a hallowed tradition, that the notion of a timeless God is incoherent. Why so? First we are told that "it is hard to see" how a timeless being could think or act; then that "it is hard to see the sense of ascribing" consciousness to such a being; and finally, ten pages later, that "there are serious objections" to any such ascription. I am sure that Sorabji is right: I am equally sure that his argument - or rather his asseveration - will and should convince no one. But these are cavils; for the book is not meant as a work of philosophy. Its philosophical excursions are adjuncts to the historical matter, and if they stimulate - or even annoy - they will have done their job.

Exegesis fills a larger portion of the book. It is not evenly spread: sometimes a figure receives several pages of patient and courteous attention, full of philological scholarship and argumentative subtlety; sometimes a doctrine or argument is recorded with scarcely a comment. But all the exegetical passages are lucidly clear and many of them are highly original. A grimly determined critic might

plausibly claim that in one or two sections Sorabji does not add much to our understanding. Thus there are many paragraphs on Zeno and many on Parmenides, but Sorabji's remarks, which are taken up in no small part with the enumeration and criticism of the views of other scholars, contribute little that is new.

There is also a more serious criticism to be made - even if it is a criticism which a book of this sort can hardly evade. The texts on time which Sorabji analyses are often excerpted from works in which the philosophy of time was neither the only nor even the central preoccupation; and the analyses of these passages usually proceeds in isolation from the particular problems and presuppositions of their authors. There are evident dangers in this approach. Consider, for example, Sorabji's account of Iamblichus' distinction between un-generated time and generated time. This distinction has been compared to McTaggart's famous distinction between the so-called A-series and B-series - better, between characteristics which can only be ascribed to time from a present standpoint (being past, being ten days hence, etc) and characteristics whose ascription does not involve such a standpoint (being earlier than the death of Iamblichus, lasting ten days, etc). This comparison is taken seriously by Sorabji, although in the end he decides that Iamblichus did not fully anticipate McTaggart. But it is plain that the comparison could only be made by someone who took Iamblichus' remarks out of context and who looked at them through an anachronistic quizzing-glass. In fact Iamblichus' distinction is nothing more than the application at a general metaphysical distinction to the particular case of time. Iamblichus is a Neoplatonist who is doing metaphysics in the Neoplatonist way: he is not a philosopher puzzling over the special problems of the reality of time. Wrenching his remarks from their proper home distorts their sense and their importance.

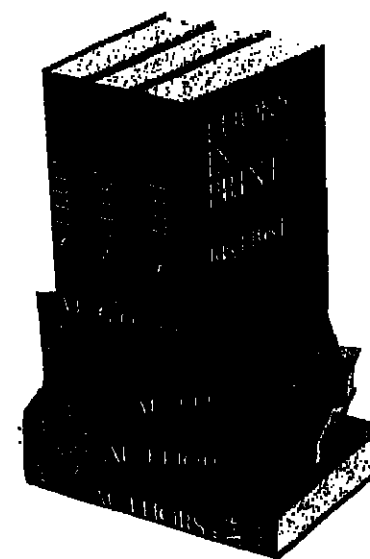
But Sorabji's book is neither a philosophical treatise nor a cento of exegeses: it is, above all, a *doxography*. And on this score it calls for unstinting praise. Sorabji cites an extraordinary number of ancient texts on time. The familiar texts - from the Presocratics, from Plato, from Aristotle - are all there. But in addition, Sorabji has unearthed a thousand unfamiliar passages from a hundred unfamiliar authors - and he has unearthed exciting passages from pretty unexciting authors. In every chapter he produces some new gem. He rightly boasts that he has taken the Neoplatonists more seriously than is usual among analytically minded philosophers; and he shows that there is much in them which even the most rigorously analytical philosopher can decently admire. He reveals, by apposite reference and quotation, how the tradition whose first significant representatives were Plato and Aristotle persisted in vivid life throughout the succeeding centuries, and how it was moulded by the Hellenistic thinkers, the Neoplatonists, the Christian fathers and the founders of Islamic philosophy. His achievement here is unparalleled. I can think of no other book so rich in esoteric learning, so full of plums.

The Alexandrian scholar Didymus was given the sobriquet "Brazen-bowelled" in recognition of his unflagging devotion to learning. Sorabji is equally chalcid; he has read all the classical texts; he has ploughed through the interminable Greek commentaries on Aristotle; he has hacked his way through the Neoplatonic jungles; he has perused the massively dull tomes of Augustine and he has combed the innumerable and unreadable volumes of the *Patrologia Graeca*. The energy and the labour are astounding.

The result is not an easy book. By its sheer length and density it demands a lot from its readers. Moreover, the book is not self-sufficient. The serious reader will have to take his copy of Sorabji to the library and look up the texts for himself. But if he does so, he will take a thesaurus with him, a marvel of scholarship and of humane learning. Sorabji has not said the last word on any of his texts (thank God). But he has opened up new territory. His work will encourage more adventures to follow him to this fascinating new-found land. The detours there will be legion, and they will work; for the next decade or so, with Sorabji in their hands,

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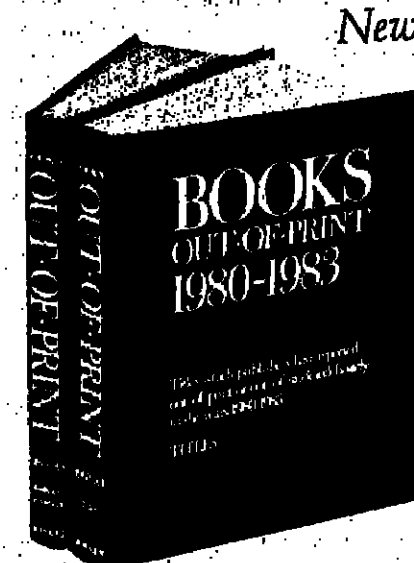
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The view from Foggy Bottom

Michael Carver

ALEXANDER M. HAIG JR
Caveat: The reminiscences of General Haig, US Secretary of State from January 1981 to June 1982
367pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.95.
0297785176

As the title of his book implies, the former US Secretary of State's reminiscences of his eighteen-month period in office, from January 1981 to June 1982, are intended as a warning, as well as a self-justification. In his concluding chapter, he states that the message of the book is that

"The world is not as it was; the United States alone cannot control history by overwhelming international problems with its wealth, its military power, and its diplomatic influence. But in concert with its friends, and in realistic understanding of its own interests as these are inextricably bound in the aspirations of mankind, it can act in the world according to the rule it has always applied at home: that the present is the means of creating a better future."

The warning is addressed to the President, to the principal members of his administration, particularly the staff of the White House, to the American people, and, presumably, to anybody like himself who might be so unwise as to accept the post of Secretary of State under the arrangements currently in force for the conduct of US foreign and "National Security" policy. It is not surprising that, as a professional soldier, General Haig should emphasize that the principal fault of those arrangements lies in the lack of discipline – indeed of any structure to enforce discipline on the system – unless the President himself is prepared and able to impose it.

Ironically, it was as assistant to Henry Kissinger, when the latter, as National Security Adviser to President Nixon, totally undermined the position of William Rogers as Secretary of State, that Al Haig acquired his first experience of the system. It was surely that experience which lay behind his determination that from the start there should be no doubt that, as far as foreign policy was concerned, the Secretary of State, and nobody else, was to be the President's "vicar". In offering him the post, in a telephone call before his inauguration, Reagan had stated that Richard Allen, as National Security Adviser, would act solely as a "staff coordinator". "You know my feeling about the Secretary of State," Reagan said. "He would be the spokesman; I won't have a

repeat of the Kissinger-Rogers situation. I'll look to you, Al." It was on that assurance that Haig accepted, and one of his first acts was to initiate the draft of "National Security Decision Document 1", intended to determine a procedure involving the State Department, the National Security Adviser's office, the Department of Defense and the White House staff. The draft was agreed, even by the White House staff, yet they never presented it to the President for signature. In spite of constant prodding from Haig. Throughout the eighteen months of his tenure of the post there was therefore no established procedure.

The situation which prevailed in that period was not an exact repetition of the Kissinger-Rogers one, for, until William Clark left the State Department, where he had been a faithful deputy to Haig, and succeeded Richard Allen as National Security Adviser in January 1982, it was not the National Security Adviser who was Haig's principal rival but the White House trio, Ed Meese, James Baker and Michael Deaver. Meese gets comparatively lenient treatment, Baker, supported by Deaver, being portrayed as the real villain of the piece. Caspar Weinberger at Defense and Jeane Kirkpatrick put their oars in from time to time to sabotage, intentionally or unintentionally, the strategy or tactics of the policy Haig was trying to pursue, while he believed, or just hoped, that it was approved by the President, whom he seldom saw tête-à-tête in order to discuss it. He lets Mrs Kirkpatrick off lightly, saying that she was "merely acting according to the rules of the system which had at its heart an evidently irresistible desire to save the President's popularity even if this meant undermining the President's policies". When Clark became NSA, he allied himself with the White House staff. At a time of almost farcical confusion, when the President was at the summit meeting at Versailles in June 1982, with the Lebanon crisis at its height and the Falklands operation in full swing, and the Vice-President and his crisis management team in Washington adding to the chaos, Clark's reply to Haig's complaint that the President had reversed a decision agreed with him, was "You've won a lot of battles in this administration, Al; but you'd better understand that from now on it's going to be the President's foreign policy."

The gravamen of Haig's charge against the White House staff is that they were primarily motivated by their desire, with their eyes on Reagan's re-election for a second term, to pre-

serve his popularity: that they believed this depended on acting consistently with the Republican rhetoric that had brought him to the White House; and that the method by which his popularity should be maintained was constant leaks to the press (about whom Haig has harsh things to say). These leaks were designed to show the President in a favourable light and to take the wind out of the sails of any other figure who might be considered to be a rival for popularity, power and influence, or, perhaps, a Republican candidate for the 1984 Presidential election. Haig was a prime target. He was not one of the Reagan clique from California. He had no political constituency of his own and was not generally popular.

Chapter by chapter the author describes the major foreign policy issues which, potential crisis following potential crisis, make the life of the American Secretary of State an almost intolerable burden – Central America, the Middle East, Nato, the Soviet Union, arms control, nuclear weapons, China and Taiwan, Poland, and so on. Not only was Haig a tough workaholic, but his views on world events, on the policy which the United States should pursue and on the methods by which it should be executed, were more objective and realistic, more attuned to the interests of other nations, than those of anybody else in the administration, including the President himself. His experience at the highest levels of the Nixon administration and of Nato, combined with his natural ability and practical mind, saw to that.

To the very end he proclaims strong admiration for Ronald Reagan: "He has contributed greatly to the revival of America's confidence and pride in itself, and in the restoration of the economy and in beginning the process of rebuilding the nation's military strength. Thanks to the President's fundamental good judgment and his many acts of political courage, the United States is stronger now than it was in 1980, its voice is more clearly heard and on the whole better understood, and if our friends have suffered shocks and surprises, they have also been reassured that America will not longer choose the flimsy alibis of its adversaries over the interests of its allies and itself. These accomplishments abundantly justify the second term which, as now seems almost certain, the American people will bestow on their forthright President."

Yet the picture he paints is a damning one: of a man who is the creature and the prisoner of his staff; whose view of world events is naive and out of date; who is unable or unwilling to take a grip of his administration, but relies on rhetoric, compromise and, at times, prevarication to solve his problems.

Those who have followed the correspondence in the TLS about the sinking of the General Belgrano will look in vain for a revelation of the truth in Haig's account. He writes that, on the crucial May 2, a Sunday, the day after the British had bombed Port Stanley, President Belaunde telephoned him at home in Washington "with the proposal that one final attempt be made to stop the fighting and find a peaceful solution". After "we" had worked all day on a new draft, which Belaunde "with his gift for clarification" had reduced to five simple points,

he [Belaunde] presented these to both sides and encountered, as he said, "a certain obstinance" in the Argentines. Nevertheless he gained acceptance of an errata slip to May 2, ie the same day sent to official of the Peruvian foreign ministry to Buenos Aires with the new paper. But while the Junta was the act of considering it, the submarine HMS Conqueror sank the Argentinean cruiser General Belgrano outside the blockade zone.

He does not mention the presence of Francis Pym in Washington on that day, and gives no evidence for the statement that both sides had accepted in principle President Belaunde's original proposal, whatever that may have been. In his account of the Falklands affair, Haig describes the frustration of his dealings with the Junta, Galtieri apparently being powerless to deliver agreements he had promised. It makes clear that the burden of his argument was that, if the Junta would not agree to the withdrawal of their forces under a face-saving formula, war was inevitable, the British would win, and the United States would have to support them. His admiration for Mrs Thatcher, and his reservations about some of her less confident colleagues, is evident. It was her realization that the affair was not just of local or purely British importance, but would be a signal to the whole world that the democracies were not going to be pushed around, that aroused his admiration. Twenty-six years earlier the American view had been different: when Eden had taken the same line over the Suez Canal.

The book provides a fascinating picture of the world as seen from Foggy Bottom. It endorses the conclusion one reached after reading Henry Kissinger's massive volumes: that it is a miracle if any consistent American foreign policy results from the confusion of the struggle for power in Washington DC, and that, as Al Haig insists, the essential need is to develop a structure which can impose discipline upon it.

Intrusions of mind

Geoffrey Marshall

GEORGE F. WILLS
Statecraft as Soulcraft: What government does 186pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95.
0297783629

By and large American conservative theorists write more interestingly than American radicals. Possibly there are fewer of them. The left are eager scribblers whilst many mute inglorious Milton Friedmans never lay pen to paper.

George F. Wills's Godkin lectures on "Soulcraft" may stir up some initial doubts, though. His publishers claim that they constitute "a profound inquiry into the national character and destiny of the United States which will startle and challenge those who read it". Can this possibly be so? Probably it can. Those who do not read it are certain to remain unstartled. Nevertheless it sounds an ambitious claim, and one that seems disproportionate to the synopsis that follows. This suggests first that the principle of self-interest is not an adequate spring of action and that it leads to self-indulgence and is generally a bad thing; secondly that a mixed economy and governmental restraint on free enterprise form a suitable goal for conservative governments; and thirdly that the state should aim at justice, social cohesion and material strength.

These are however lectures designed to be delivered face to face, not a meticulous foot-noted treatise. George Wills is the author of an earlier work entitled *The Pursuit of Happiness and Other Sobering Thoughts*, and when we read that he spends a lot of time thinking about baseball and intends to explain why both it and politics are nobler enterprises than are today generally understood the spirit lifts a little.

So on to Statecraft as Soulcraft. What is it and what does George Wills want the state to do? In part soulcraft has to assuage the ache of life with a stationary frontier. "The persistent melancholy beneath the skin of American life" is brought on by having arrived not long ago on an empty continent and only recently surrendered a belief in infinite possibility.

Something also of the essence of conservative soulcraft is conveyed apophegmatically ("Parents do not think that in the long run we are all dead"; "All of us have been around for as long as we can remember" – and so on). But much of it is straightforward prescription about the proper role of the state. Here we search for clues about what the political soulcraftsman ought to do. One thing that it seems he may do is delegate his role of primary instructor to non-state institutions. But what is the substance of the instruction? We know that it has as its aim the nurturing of people so that they can be comfortable and competent in society. Soulcraft perpetuates government by legitimizing notions of its origins and mission. It begins to sound like the lectures at some army rehabilitation centre. But what does it say? Precisely and in detail what does it say?

In general it is intended to convey the message that public interests should get preference

over private interests. Since the onset of modernity (say 1750), it is argued, government has inculcated the necessity of appealing to interests. This seems to be stretching things rather. It is philosophers, if anybody, who have gone on about the public benefits of pursuing private interest. Governments can hardly be said to have neglected appeals to the common good and general welfare.

But now we get to what may be the crux of soulcraft. It has to do with the prudent intrusion of mind into the swirl of events. Many recent conservative thinkers have been keen to get the state and the citizens' minds together. But it usually ends in a muddle.

The first bit of the muddle here appears when it is argued that recent trends in legislation have seen a decline in the endeavour of governments to influence social values. Examples given are laws permitting abortion, licensing obscenity, encouraging homosexuality and diminishing the hold of religion. But why should these be treated as evidence of the "steady withdrawal of the law from the citizen's state of mind"? Suppose the law were to require compulsory abstinence from sexual activity or compulsory church attendance. Would that signify any closer juxtaposition of law and mind, or just the promotion of different types of mental and physical activity?

Further confusion threatens when the many voices for which soulcraft is a remedy are mentioned as if they were connected parts of a single state of affairs. The soulcraftsman rejects such views as that law is not concerned with internal beliefs or the inner life; that preoccupation with the physical world may lead to neglect of the moral world; that "moral opinions are none of the government's business"; that there is a legitimate sphere of private morality; that "the government cannot legislate morality"; and that the government should be neutral in major conflicts between social values. But these are not the same or necessarily related beliefs and need separate discussion. Some also are misrepresented. Mr Justice Frankfurter, for example, is scolded for saying that "Law has no concern with the inner life of man". But this bit of rhetoric (delivered in the *Gibbs v. State* case) was mainly meant to underpin the view that religious beliefs should not exempt citizens from complying with common legal obligations not aimed at religious suppression. Whether right or wrong it is more in harmony with soulcraft than inconsistent with it. Similar flourishes often occur in judicial rhetoric. If a Supreme Court judge says that the government should "keep out of the sphere of intellect", the belief that the law should keep out of the citizen's private concerns or his right to free expression does not imply that government may not ever or often be properly concerned with the citizen's mind or morals. Why otherwise would the state provide free education, or imprison thieves for dishonesty?

If soulcraft is the "citizenry working on itself" to produce a shared political philosophy the philosophy is an incomplete one. As it stands it is intelligent, cheerful and goodhearted but evasive.

Along new paths

H. G. Nicholas

NELSON W. POLSBY
Political Innovation in America: The politics of policy initiation 185pp. Yale University Press. £16.50.
0 300 03089 4

STEVEN J. ROSENSTONE, ROY L. BEHR and EDWARD H. LAZARUS
Third Parties in America: Citizen response to major party failure 266pp. Princeton University Press. £23.20. (paperback, £6.40).
0 691 07673 1

Nelson Polsby has tried his hand at producing a typology of American political innovations and elucidating their causes, promoters and processes. He does not lack material. The New Frontier, the New Deal, the New Freedom, the New Nationalism, the New South – such slogans and programmes are eloquent testimony to the popularity of innovation as an American ideal. In a universe of such diversity, a task of this kind requires a blend of boldness and sensitivity which he is exceptionally well equipped to supply. He has sought to reduce the intrinsic unmanageability of his material by restricting himself to major innovations, such as represent a substantial break with pre-existing behaviour, and which also have lasting consequences. Furthermore, he has confined his inquiry to the period since 1945. On this basis he has selected eight instances of policy innovation ranging from the launching of the Truman Doctrine to the establishment of the Council of Economic Advisers. In justifying this selection Professor Polsby displays what might be regarded as an excessive deference to sociologically-minded critics who look for a greater degree of precision than the subject-matter can sustain, and in the process muddies his usually crisp exposition with a needless amount of social science jargon. But for the essential core of his examination he is content to settle for modest probabilities; for clues and tendencies rooted in the messy real world, and to tease out, in workmanlike language, the likely implications of his investigations.

The bulk of the book is devoted to an analysis of the actual processes of innovation; comparatively little is said of the first stage of innovation, the hatching of a new idea. Polsby doubtless agrees at heart with Richard Scammon's contention that "there really aren't any new solutions". Most good ideas have already been thought of. The notion of "novelty" here can be ambiguous; for instance, the Truman Doctrine in its time and place was a novel departure in American foreign policy, but was not at all a novel weapon in the armoury of diplomacy. Polsby is not much interested in the transmission of political innovation – the role, for example, of European governments in pioneering national health services or social security. Here his self-imposed restriction of period may have exacted a price: a time-span which took in that greatest of all phases of American political

innovation, the New Deal, might have focused attention more on this aspect, among others.

The main thrust of *Political Innovation in America* is on the second stage in the innovation process, "incubation" – how the idea passes from being an aspiration of an individual or a group and becomes part of the active agenda of national politics. To the English reader this may well be the most revealing part of the inquiry, for it is at this point that the contrast between the American and the British political systems and in particular their handling of issues and crises becomes most apparent.

In Britain the comparatively orderly processes of cabinet, parliamentary and party government take control of the innovation when the time is judged to be ripe for it, and subject it to the discipline and (very occasionally) the stimulus of the party programmers, the bureaucracy, the cabinet and the whips. Progression from Royal Commission to Statute Book may be sluggish but if it once gets under way it is almost certain to hold its course, with few unforeseen hazards. By contrast the American innovation has as exciting a history as the Perils of Pauline, with an outcome infinitely less predictable. The roles played in its evolution by politician and official, expert and layman, interest group and party leadership, are repeatedly blurred and confused, and that indispensable Washington institution, the lawyer as political or administrative middleman, is conspicuously active. Indeed when Polsby comes to gather up his conclusions, it is to the relatively quiet figures such as the "adaptors, policy entrepreneurs, brokers, incubators" that he is disposed to attach the most importance.

One of the components of the American system that at first glance might have been expected to be a source of innovation is the third party. What, after all, in view of their consistent record of electoral failure, are third parties for, but to be the champions of ideas whose time has not yet come? Yet in fact, as the authors of *Third Parties in America* show, they are seldom real innovators. Even the Prohibition Party had less to do with the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment than the Anti-Saloon League (though it may, surprisingly, take some credit for promoting women's suffrage). The poor third party is indeed by definition doomed to failure, in that if any part of its programme looks realisable one (or both) of the two main parties will steal it. And yet, leap year after leap year, the third parties persist. This, plus the rumbled cosiness of the subject-matter, makes them a recurrently attractive topic for students of politics. Steven Rosenstone and his colleagues do not have very much to add to the accepted wisdom on the subject, nor is their study written with much elegance or edge. But they provide a convenient potted account of third parties in American history and a clear description of the way in which the dice have been loaded against their success. Opinions will differ about the value of their theoretical section with its unsurprising conclusion that "when certain motivations to vote for a minor party candidate are high, and the constraints against doing so are low, citizens will start down the third party path".

Reducing the temperature

Lawrence Freedman

GEORGE F. KENNAN
The Nuclear Delusion: Soviet-American relations in the Atomic Age 265pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.50.
0241 111854

For almost sixty years, since he first joined the US diplomatic service in 1926, George F. Kennan has been preoccupied with relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. As a practitioner he can note that his memory takes us back further than most on this subject; his scholarship takes us back even further.

Kennan's period of greatest influence over the course of these relations came in the second half of the 1940s when he occupied some critical diplomatic posts at an unusually critical time. He describes his views in 1945, from the vantage point of the American Embassy in Moscow, as being concerned, "almost to the point of despair", with the consequences of the war that was just ending for the relationship between the Soviet Union and the West. Not only could he not see the basis of a lasting European peace, but there also was little basis for a modicum of mutual understanding. To calm things down the first requirement was

to deprive both sides of their respective unrealistic hopes: the Russians, of their hopes for some sort of political conquest over the remainder of Europe in the wake of what they supposed would be the unilateral withdrawal of American armed forces from the continent; the Americans, of their fabulous dreams of a happy and clumsy collaboration with Moscow in the restoration of prosperity and stability in Europe along liberal lines.

It was to this end that Kennan wrote his famous "long telegram" from Moscow, a version of which appeared later under the mysterious name of "X" in the influential journal *Foreign Affairs*, arguing for a much more sober view of Soviet intentions. Despite himself he was one of the initiators of the Cold War, or at least one of the first to appreciate what was going on.

It is a matter of debate whether American disillusionment with the Soviet Union would have occurred in any case, irrespective of military factors – including the new atomic bombs – or indeed whether Kennan himself at the time really believed the Cold War could have been avoided. The relevant passage of the "X" article is extremely ambiguous. He certainly believed that the key to thwarting future Soviet advances was to be found largely in the economic and political spheres: it was to this end that he helped to put together the Marshall Plan for Europe's post-war reconstruction.

At this point Kennan suddenly found things going wrong, with the Cold War developing fast and the Continent becoming militarized, dividing on the basis of rigid alliances that precluded a long-term political settlement. It was in this context that he saw the growing American dependence on nuclear weapons. From the start Kennan rejected this, on both moral and practical grounds. He accepted the need for some sort of retaliatory capability but not that the United States should prepare to employ the weapons "deliberately, immediately, and unhesitatingly in the event that we become involved in a military conflict with the Soviet Union".

Since then Kennan has been trying to

reverse the militarization of East-West relations, and to achieve the sort of political settlement that had proved to be so elusive in the 1940s. Thus one of his persistent themes during the past thirty years has been the absence of East-West issues that could possibly be resolved by war – let alone nuclear war.

The other theme which figures prominently in these essays is the argument with those in the United States who have promoted an exaggerated and alarmist view of Soviet intentions and capabilities. As the hawks have become more strident, so in response has Kennan – so much so that in the later essays in this collection he tends towards overstatement of his case and a lack of interest in any positions other than his own and those of his most extreme opponents. He admits in the introduction to now arguing for the abolition of war itself, thus breaking his own rule against the advocacy of utopian policies.

It has to be said that *The Nuclear Delusion: Soviet-American relations in the Atomic Age* suffers from repetition. The same basic points are hammered home, often with the same phrases. After a useful autobiographical introduction, we are given some of Kennan's early reflections on nuclear weapons, and then two substantial essays – the first a retrospective on the American-Soviet relationship and a 1976 piece on détente. These seem to provide the material for the other two-thirds of the book.

The most interesting item in the later section is the proposal, which received some publicity at the time it was made in 1981, for a 50 per cent reduction in the superpower nuclear arsenals. The reader attracted by the title should be warned, however, that the analysis

of the nuclear arms race to these pages compares neither in quantity nor quality with the discussion on East-West relations. A further weakness is that other features of the international scene do not get anything like the same attention as the core US-Soviet relationship. This is particularly true when it comes to the role of European countries. Kennan tends to present them as having pulled the United States into a confrontation with the Soviet Union that it might otherwise have avoided. In a couple of awkward pieces on Poland there is a certain insensitivity to the position of the Poles. This leads to the suspicion that in his desire to reduce the risks of superpower conflict he would encourage all Europeans to keep their interests and instincts in check; just as his concentration on the superpowers and his sense of the lost opportunities of the 1940s makes one suspect he believes that if only the process of militarization set in motion then – and in particular the development of the nuclear arsenal and the doctrines this has entailed – could be reversed, it would be possible to set the world on the path it might just have followed those three-and-a-half decades ago.

George Kennan commands our attention through his eloquence, experience and humanity. Unfortunately one realizes towards the end of this book that this is not quite enough.

The International Security Yearbook 1983/84 (357pp. Macmillan. £25. 0 353 36929 7) edited by Barry M. Blechman and Edward N. Luttwak and sponsored by the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies aims to provide a non-partisan digest of

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In back of the shop

Hugh Kenner

NOEL RILEY FITCH

Sylvia Beach and *The Lost Generation*: A history of literary Paris in the twenties and thirties. 447pp. Souvenir Press. £14.95. 0284649973

Nancy Woodbridge Beach, born in 1887 in Baltimore, later chose to be Sylvia, perhaps after her father, the Rev Sylvester Beach. Was she obliquely reaching for a masculine identity? "Whether from my Puritan ancestry or puritanical upbringing—once when I was in my early teens my mother told me 'never to let a man touch me'—I was always physically afraid of men." That is from an unpublished portion of her memoirs, one major source for this biography. Her papers are in the rare book collection at Princeton University, and the reason the library thought them worth acquiring is of course that Sylvia Beach and her Paris bookshop, Shakespeare & Co., are inextricable from twentieth-century literary history. Notably, Shakespeare & Co. was the publisher of *Ulysses*. It's hard to believe she was ever afraid of anything.

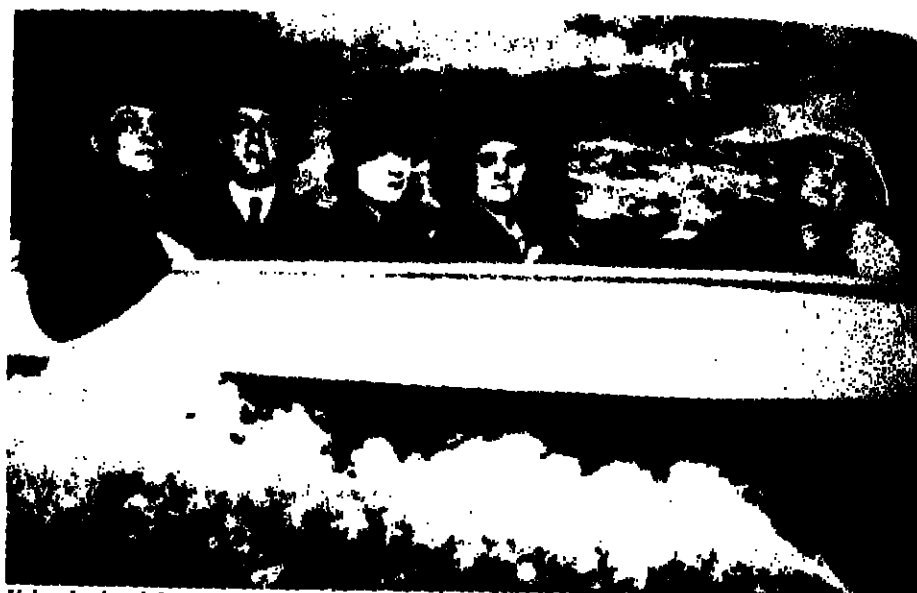
Her biographer is blessedly incurious about the physical—thus when Sylvia moves in with Adrienne Monnier late in 1920, the narrative raises not an eyebrow. Keeping a respectful distance from its subject's private life, it conveys a clear sense of her individuality: wiry, angularly beautiful, quick, direct, principled—an expatriate who, unlike Gertrude Stein,

mingled freely with the French and spoke their language with idiomatic wit. When she tired, as she inevitably did, of exactions such as Joyce's, she didn't seek ways to renege—Marianne Moore said of her that she never "allowed logic to regret over-charity". She opened her famous shop in late 1919 and closed it only in 1941. The book ends with her death in 1962 (in Paris, of a heart attack).

So we're told much that's new. Inevitably, to make the story complete, much else is also told, and Noel Riley Fitch's handling of what one has heard before erodes one's confidence. We learn to expect local liveliness, but not trustworthy potted history. Though instances are trivial, their effect mounts up.

Thus, of *The Waste Land* typescript: "Complimenti, you bitch . . .", cried Ezra Pound to T. S. Eliot on Christmas Eve (1921) after he had read "The Waste Land". The midwife Pound then blue-pencilled out a third of the poem and returned it to Eliot. "No, the 'Complimenti' saluted Eliot's new version, incorporating blue-pencil aid already rendered. That is perfectly obvious from the published text of Pound's letter. (And the date was not Christmas Eve 1921 but a month later, January, 24. This less well-known fact I insert for the record. It's been in print for over ten years.)

Or Pound to Joyce: "When he asked for Joyce's poem 'I Hear an Army Charging Upon the Land', Joyce sent it to him, complaining about the difficulty he was having publishing his first novel . . ." But Yeats had already given Pound the poem—all Joyce was asked for, and sent, was permission to reprint it. This



Valéry Larbaud, Léon-Paul Fargue, Marie Monnier, Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier at the Pöbel in June 1924, from the book reviewed here.

isn't a recondite detail—it's quite explicit in Richard Ellmann's biography of Joyce, or in Mrs Fitch's probable source, Forrest Read's *Pound / Joyce*. But she seems to consult sources rather hastily.

Then there's her characterization of 1902: "This was the same year that James Joyce completed his education at University College, Dublin, broke with the Catholic Church, and lived briefly in Paris." "Broke with the Catholic Church": it would be a bold historian indeed who'd affix a single date to that long disavowment.

Or of 1919: "Nor could she know that the man who would radically change her bookshop was then teaching English in Trieste and working every evening on a book he was to call *Ulysses*." At that point the teaching obligation of the man in question amounted to one hour per day at the New University, and *Ulysses* could have as much daytime attention as he chose to give it.

From Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce*: "Adrienne Monnier now introduced James Light, with a reminder that some of the passages read might seem 'audacious'. They included the execution scene from the *Cyclops*, the romance in the 'Sirens', a few pages from 'Ithaca' . . . and the last six pages of 'Penelope' (during the reading of the *Cyclops* episode, Joyce informed Miss Weaver, 'the light went out very much as it did for the Cyclops himself, but the audience was not patient'.)"

And from Fitch: "Jimmy Light read the 'Sirens' portion in English, during which time the lights went out briefly, a mystical and probably coincidental parallel to the 'Cyclops' section as well as to the young man's name. 'Here only 'Sirens' gets read, yet the lights (now) go out in allusion to 'Cyclops'. Trivial, yes, I know—but one more index of intuition. Our regard for a book is damaged when we come to suspect its words of patterning on the page with random fecklessness."

I have a far longer list, but never mind. Briefly, regrettably: our author is not well enough informed about the literature of the period. She is naive about the weighing of evidence and careless in her use of sources. She marches names onstage without really knowing who their owners were. It is very much a tribute to Sylvia Beach that her character emerges so forcefully from so much rhetorical disorder. We are all in her debt; and she deserves a more scrupulous biography.

Dollar collarer

Andrew Sinclair

STANLEY JACKSON

J.P. Morgan: The rise and fall of a banker. 332pp. Heinemann. £14.95. 043437055 X

Stanley Jackson in his preface to *J.P. Morgan, The rise and fall of a banker*, states that he intended to write a study of banking power. It would have been better written so. Instead, this new biography of Morgan is made from already familiar if unattributed material.

Most business activities are secretive. After an illustrious start in money-lending, J.P. Morgan made his business dealings clandestine to the point of paranoia. Records were systematically destroyed, correspondence burned, even the letters of his own letters to his banking father Junius Spencer Morgan. Any life of him must rely heavily on the family biography written

by Herbert L. Satterlee and the private opinions of Morgan expressed by his various associates, rivals and victims. Primary sources are rare: hearsay rich. Bernard Baruch, whose *My Own Story* is included in a brief bibliography, is said to have been eligible to become a young Morgan partner, but was disqualified by Morgan's supposed belief in "Aryan" racial superiority—nowhere documented in his dealings with Jewish bankers in Europe nor in his friendships. Graciously, Mr Jackson adds: "But for the lack of a millimeter or so of skin, Bernard Baruch might have sat at one of the mahogany rolltop desks." This is poor and tasteless biography, and it is compounded by continual references to Morgan's red nose, like the author calls a "veined strawberry-like obscenity".

Jackson's analysis of the major Morgan trusts formed by the Morgan group is tacked on. But little new information is contributed because no new documents have been found.

What is to be done

E.J. Mishan

W.W. ROSTOW

The Barbaric Counter-Revolution: Cause and cure. 126pp. University of Texas Press. £11.85. 029270749 5

A few months ago, W.W. Rostow, an accomplished economic historian, was tempted to don the robes of the economic medicine-man and to produce for us an analysis of the cause of our economic afflictions and a plan for their cure. And it must be granted that he writes far better than most professional economists. He moves at a brisk pace and expresses himself with clarity and conviction. By frequent enunciation of short lists of causes and consequences, suggestive of close and systematic thinking, the outline of his arguments is impressed on the mind of the attentive reader.

Nobody has ever accused Rostow of lack of ambition. His opening paragraph, somewhat reminiscent of that of the *Communist Manifesto*, announces that "the advanced industrial countries of the Western World are in the grip of a barbaric counter-revolution", one that is eroding their "physical and social infrastructure", "driving the developing regions into a potentially explosive phase of stagnation, and threatening the precarious equilibrium of a fragile, divided global community in a thermodynamic age". As he perceives it, his short book presents a plan designed to overcome the counter-revolution and "to generate civilized policies for the 1980s and beyond".

This so-called counter-revolution Rostow associates with the restrictive monetary policies currently being followed by Western countries and dates its beginning from the imposition of strict controls on the money supply by the Federal Reserve Bank in October 1979. Rostow's analysis is in fact conducted largely in terms of American experience and economic policies, with particular attention being paid to the period 1979-1982.

His Chapter Two tells us "How We Got There: 1951-1981" and in doing so compares the growth rates in the various industrial countries for different periods, more pertinently for the periods 1950-73, which averaged close to 4 per cent per capita per annum, and 1973-79, during which the average had fallen to 2 per cent. In subsequent years it was still lower, especially in the United States where it was negative in the years 1981 and 1982. The critical year, according to Rostow, was 1983/84 when oil prices quadrupled and grain prices rose by about 50 per cent. The resulting increase in the cost of living accelerated the incipient wage-push inflation, forced up interest rates, and undermined business confidence.

In the same and the following chapter, there follows an account of what Rostow sees as muddled and indecisive policies, pursued by successive US administrations, which exacerbated the country's economic difficulties. He is particularly scathing of the "supply-siders", who urged federal tax cuts as a means of expanding the economy and increasing its tax revenue, and of the attempts made to reduce federal expenditures. Above all, he is critical of the application of monetarism in a bid to "squeeze inflation out of the economy", the efficacy of which policy was later supposed by monetarists to depend upon the creation of an atmosphere of "rational expectations".

Chapter Four details the pertinent events of the years 1981-83 during which unemployment, from being below 6 per cent in 1979, rose from 7½ per cent to 10 per cent, while the inflation rate, over 10 per cent in 1980, fell from 9 per cent to about 5 per cent. It was towards the end of this period that the American economy seemed to be stuck on the horns of a dilemma. Taking as unavoidable the level of military expenditure, the growth in welfare expenditures to support millions of families without work entailed huge federal deficits which could be financed (without a massive increase in liquidity) only by raising interest rates so high as to discourage the private investment believed necessary for recovery; and, incidentally, strengthening the international value of the dollar which acted to reduce exports. Moreover, there was and still is much doubt whether a "reflation" of the

American economy would be possible without also activating the latent inflationary potential.

The last two chapters of this absorbing book, along with a brief Conclusion, tell us, in the words of the title of Chapter Six, "What is to be Done" in order to return to the beatific economic state of high employment and sustained economic growth. Among the policies advocated is the fostering of what Rostow calls "The Fourth Industrial Revolution"—microelectronics, communications, "offshoots of genetics", lasers, robots, new synthetics—while rehabilitating the older basic industries. There will have to be massive investment in the long neglected public capital sector in order to restore and renew the vital infrastructure of the American economy—the roads, highways, bridges, dams, the water supplies, the sewage systems, the pollution controls.

Above all, a comprehensive incomes policy supported by government, labour, and the business community, has to replace monetary policy as the means of preventing inflation. This, of course, is the lynch-pin necessary to support his other proposals, and the dozen or so pages devoted to its discussion do not perhaps go far enough to dispel all scepticism even though he does recognize the chief difficulties in creating the necessary consensus. In particular, Rostow's reference to the experience of Japan and Germany in being able apparently to combine equitable wage-price controls with flexibility is far from being persuasive. The period of seeming success, for one thing, is far too short for plausible conclusions to be drawn. For another, their economic record owed something to their limited military budgets. Again, being the two major defeated powers and anxious for reinstatement in the comity of nations, both made efforts to impress the world by their honest industry and political moderation. At any rate, the feasibility of an all-embracing incomes policy is less assured for countries such as Britain and the US where, until recently at least, organized labour has been more turbulent and incorrigibly opportunistic.

Without taking issue with the outline of Rostow's critique, it is possible to take a broader and more cynical view of economic events since the Second World War. For thirty years or so following the end of the war, annual real wages rose without respite. This trend was initially a necessary consequence of the recovery of productive capacity in the wake of so much destruction, aided, especially in the case of Germany and Japan, by American capital. It continued to be explained by the benefit of inspired hindsight by a number of factors none of which, however, could properly be called inevitable. So long a run of unprecedented economic luck not only created an atmosphere of confidence, shared by economists as well as governments and businessmen, but was instrumental in generating that "revolution of expectations" which transformed the attitudes of working populations the world over and gave rise to a seemingly irresistible wage momentum. The seed of inflation had been sown and the plant was already in bud well before 1973. Even in the absence of the steep rise in oil prices and the adverse movement in the terms of trade in the years 1973/4, the inflation would have accelerated.

Whether this interpretation of events is plausible or not, it is certainly possible that no economic policy short of heavy and prolonged unemployment could have checked the spiralling power of what was essentially a wage-push inflation. Although the monetarist analysis is suspect and monetarists failed to anticipate the extent of the unemployment that was to occur, the restrictive financial policies followed by monetarist-influenced governments in Britain and America succeeded in generating unemployment on a scale massive enough to damp the militant ardour of the labour unions and so allow the inflation rate to settle at a more manageable figure.

But the crucial question remains: in this new synthetic, high-tech world of instant communication and supersensitivity to wage differentials, obsessed also with unrealistic norms of social equity, still giddy with insatiable aspirations and prone to populist pressures and ethnic disaffection—in such a world is it possible to enjoy a high level of employment without great risk of igniting another ravaging inflation?

State by state

Edmund Fawcett

NEAL R. PEIRCE and JERRY HAGSTROM

The Book of America: Inside 50 states today. 910pp. Norton. £19.95. 039301639 0

Neal R. Peirce's great strength as a journalist is his wide and detailed knowledge of state and local government, about which he writes a weekly column syndicated by the *Washington Post*.

Peirce is the author of a series of excellent political guides to the United States; the first, *The Megastates* (1972), which dealt with the ten most populous states, is now out of print and many of the eight regional volumes which followed later are difficult to find. These guides are lightened by snatches of conversation with the people he interviewed on his travels—mayors, governors, union leaders, businessmen and businesswomen. Part of the attraction of these books is that they caught the variety of the American regions and took each state as far as possible on its own terms, without making empty comparisons. Peirce had a common theme to hold them together in the old question: "Who runs this place?" Wherever he went, he tried to tease out the connections of money and political power.

Although not advertised as such, *The Book of America* amounts to an abridgment and updating of Peirce's earlier series. The trouble with it is not difficult to spot. It covers fifty states and the District of Columbia in 910 pages, while *The Megastates* alone ran to 745 pages. *The Book of America* is so packed with

facts and figures—on their own an undeniable virtue—that it is hurried and cramped. Interesting small states get only a dozen pages or less. The geography, history, and politics of each state is briefly summarized, but, irritatingly, not always in that order. California gets the longest treatment, but even seventy-three pages is not enough and the section on Los Angeles is particularly disappointing. The best chapters are on medium-sized states like Pennsylvania or Ohio. Too often, though, the text degenerates into lists. There is no time to step back to make sense of the flood of fact. A garbled account of the career of the controversial city planner, Ed Logue, is scattered in the entries on three different states. Water, a problem throughout the West, is only dwelt on under California. Anecdotes which give the flavour of a state are rare. And as if the authors had suddenly got instructions from their editors to make the book useful to tourists, there are baffling district-by-district descriptions of some big cities. Peirce visited the states he wrote about for the earlier books. The foreword says, evasively, that *The Book of America* "grew out of years of travel". By the feel of it, not many of those cities were revisited.

Much of the information presented here can be better found elsewhere, in Michael Barone's *Almanac of American Politics*, for example, which covers the United States by congressional district and provides a mass of useful statistics for each one in tables that do not clutter the text. Like Peirce's earlier guides, Barone's book is treasured and its sections torn out of it by campaign journalists, travelling light, but then a new edition comes out every two years.

Queen Elizabeth I

Most Politick Princess



'She was an early prototype of a "handbag economist"'

Paul Johnson
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Roy Strong

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Reconstruction and after

Christine Bolt

ERIC FONER
Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and its legacy
142pp. Louisiana State University Press. £12.70.
080711118 X
NANCY J. WEISS
Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black politics in the age of FDR
333pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press £28.20 (paperback, £10.20).
069104703 0

Until recently, little attention has been paid to the comparative history of emancipation and its aftermath, whereas the institution of slavery and the race relations bound up with it have produced important comparative studies. Various explanations may be offered for this neglect. The struggle against slavery was dramatic and frequently heroic, while the defence of the indefensible, for example in the American South, sometimes took an elaborate and challenging form. By contrast, abolition often seemed almost anti-climactic, bringing dismay and disillusionment to all concerned. Moreover, historians in the United States were for a long time understandably concerned with celebrating the special character of a country which in part originated in the rejection of Europe, and drew much of its confidence from a belief in American exceptionalism. The determination with which Americans have distinguished between European colonialism and their own expansionism, for example, still disconcerts European students coming to American history for the first time. Yet the primary value of comparative history is, ironically, that it points up what is distinctive about particular historical experiences; and this is certainly one of the achievements of Eric Foner's elegant and tightly argued *Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures*, now published under the title *Nothing But Freedom*.

In his three lectures, Foner looks first at the legacy of slavery in Haiti and the British Caribbean, and at the "emancipation of land from black ownership" in British southern and eastern Africa. Having examined the key issues between the emancipated, their former masters and metropolitan authority – "state-sponsored immigration, laws regulating labor, taxation, the administration of justice, and the statutory definition of property rights" – he

then takes up these questions in the post-abolition United States. The final essay is an analysis of their resolution at the local level during Reconstruction among rice-workers in South Carolina. What emerges as distinctive about the American freedmen is their political rights, however difficult these proved to exercise and retain; and a degree of political power in turn buttressed black efforts to achieve economic autonomy. What emerges as distinctive about the larger American situation is its political complexity and the existence of some white support for "black Reconstruction". Conversely, the comparative method also shows that post-emancipation struggles in all the areas under review had similar consequences: they confirmed the resilience of the old ruling classes, ensured the survival of a modified form of plantation agriculture, and eventually left the freedmen trapped by various forms of economic exploitation and racial segregation.

At this point, Foner seems close to recent theorists who have minimized the consequences of emancipation. But he none the less makes his case both for the uniqueness and radicalism of Reconstruction, following the great black scholar and activist W. E. B. Du Bois, to whose memory *Nothing But Freedom* is dedicated. Furthermore, Foner shows clearly that blacks knew their own business, as does Nancy Weiss's work on their voting behaviour during the New Deal. Black slaves in the United States may not have had the same "right" to extensive provision grounds as their counterparts in the Caribbean, yet in due course the freedmen of both regions showed their determination to reassert and then augment their traditional rights. The Southern blacks' sense of what was owed to them in freedom resulted, among other things, in a desire for land and, failing that, a preference for share-cropping over supervised wage labour. If these were not necessarily the best priorities when viewed simply in pecuniary terms, they indicated the blacks' strong desire to control their own time and labour. Along the way, Foner provides us with fascinating insights into the relatively neglected debates over fencing laws and hunting and fishing rights in the post-emancipation South, and into the solidarity of the low-country black community.

In her study of American blacks in the 1930s, when the precarious gains of Reconstruction had been lost, Nancy Weiss, like Foner, focuses upon economic issues rather than race relations, though the latter are not ignored. She does so for the very good reason that the

Democrats' record on race was poor and blacks knew it. Far from being misled by the rhetoric and symbolism of the New Deal, blacks transferred their political allegiance from the Republicans to F.D.R., because they obtained some economic benefits from New Deal measures, and he was their brightest political option. The realism of black voters is shown by the fact that the better-off among them were the last to desert the Republican party, having the least need for New Deal aid, and by the way in which blacks supported the President, before they overwhelmingly supported his party.

This is not to underestimate the symbolic importance of certain factors in the black experience during the New Deal: political patronage that they had not formerly enjoyed, the black cabinet, the genuine concern of Eleanor Roosevelt, and the personal magnetism of the racially conservative and politically calculating President. Indeed, Roosevelt inherited the mantle of Abraham Lincoln and he, like Lincoln, entered into political mythology as "a hero, a father figure, a saviour, and a messiah" to black people. Roosevelt's unwillingness to upset the Southern wing of his party by tackling the lynching, segregation and disfranchisement of blacks did not prevent his emergence as a hero in times which demanded one, and when he was the best available candidate, any more than Lincoln's ambivalence on race and

slow progress towards emancipation prevented his glorification as the "great emancipator".

Although she is telling what is in outline, fairly well-known tale, the range of sources, the detail of her account, and the subtleties with which she discusses the options and difficulties facing blacks and white Democrats enhance our understanding of New Deal politics. While she recognizes the shortcomings of the principal New Deal actors on the issue of race, she also makes a strong case for the leadership having achieved as much as it could as they dared. After all, Congress never passed an anti-lynching bill, while the poll tax was outlawed as a requirement for voting in national elections until 1964. Nor was there, until the Second World War, a situation abroad in which blacks could gain additional political leverage. A Republican campaign advertisement in 1936 invited "coloured voters" to "their resentment against the 'New Deal' Democratic Administration's brutal indifference to the rape of Ethiopia". But the Administration's neglect of the domestic race problem was a more important source of resentment and foreign affairs would only loom large when they could be used to highlight the irony of America's fighting for democracy abroad while denying justice to blacks at home.

The whole story

Howard Temperley

MALDWIN A. JONES
The Limits of Liberty: American History 1607-1980
680pp. Oxford University Press. £22.50 (paperback, £9.95).
019913074 4

For a single scholar these days to attempt a comprehensive history of the United States might well be regarded as a rash undertaking. That Maldwyn A. Jones has brought it off with such skill and assurance is all the more remarkable for being the achievement of a British scholar. There have, it is true, been many previous attempts by historians on this side of the Atlantic to provide an overview of American history but never on this scale and certainly none which, in terms of coverage and attention to detail, compare as this volume does with the larger and nowadays almost invariably co-operatively written texts published in the United States.

That said, it should be emphasized that there is nothing specifically British about Professor Jones's *The Limits of Liberty*. Indeed, comparing the chapter headings and sub-headings with those of standard American texts, one might well wonder if there is anything new about it all. The format is traditional, even a little old-fashioned. There are no illustrations, and the maps and tables are relegated to a separate section at the back. First impressions are, however, misleading. The strength of the work lies in the synoptic skill displayed by its author in handling complex issues and, in particular, in the adept way in which he has managed to incorporate into his account the findings of recent scholarship. This is immediately evident when one compares his treatment of such issues as slavery or egalitarianism with that in, say, Morison, Commager and Leuchterberg's *Concise History of the American Republic*, a volume (published under the same imprint) now plainly revealed as being in need of drastic revision.

The cogency of Professor Jones's judgments is strikingly displayed in his handling of recent events. John F. Kennedy is represented as being committed to already outmoded Cold War postures based on the mistaken assumption that America's economic and military power was so overwhelming that she could police the whole world. In the event he achieved remarkably little at home or abroad. Nixon, by contrast, is shown as more flexible, adopting a new approach to foreign affairs which enabled his administration to establish an understanding first with China and then with the Soviet Union. Had he only been honest he might well have proved a worthy president. Jimmy Carter, on the other hand, is pre-

sented as a "decent, well-meaning, immensely dedicated man... overwhelmed by the problems of the country". Despite the high hopes entertained at the time of his election his administration proved a sad disappointment.

Overall, the book is heavily weighted towards the modern period. The first century and a half of settlement are passed over in less than fifty pages as compared with the eighty pages devoted to developments since 1945. It is noticeable that political events, such as presidential elections, are conscientiously cordoned, presumably because it was felt that omit them would weaken what is, after all, intended primarily as a student text, whereas broader themes, such as urban growth after the Civil War and the development of the modern consumer society, developments more likely to be of interest to the general reader, are dealt with more briefly than one might have wished. It is here, however, that the author's skill in balancing arguments and presenting new material is most ably displayed. Anyone wishing to find out what has happened to blacks or women as a result of the struggles of the past two decades will be well rewarded.

The general reader may at times find the work hard going, partly because it is, in 680 pages notwithstanding, a formidable exercise in compression but also because of what could well be regarded as its principal virtue, namely its even-handedness. Although he is, as in the case of Jimmy Carter, by no means reluctant to pass judgment on individuals, Maldwyn Jones is careful not to take sides on more general questions, nor does he encourage his readers to do so. Compared with most such texts there are remarkably few quotations. The voices we hear are not those of the participants: passionate, committed, often unreasoning. Nor, one suspects, do they reflect the author's own responses to the heroism, tragedy, irony and folly of it all. There are no purple passages, no flights of the imagination, indeed no attempt of any kind to stir the emotions, as opposed to the intellect, of his readers. There is, in fact, only one voice, that of the professional scholar, meticulous over points of detail, prompt to give credit where credit is due and to balance argument with argument. This is not the only way to write history and plainly it will not please everyone but, given the student audience for which it is principally designed, the book is much to be commended. One hopes that other contributions to the Short Oxford History of the Modern World will measure up to these exacting standards.

The Fire of Liberty, compiled and edited by Edmond Wright (256pp. Hamish Hamilton, £9.95. 0 241 11110 2) is a history of the American Revolution told in the words of those involved and presenting the American and the English viewpoints alternately.

The alliance in flux

Paul Kennedy

D. CAMERON WATT
Succeeding John Bull: America in Britain's Place 1900-1975
302pp. Cambridge University Press. £22.50.
052125022 6

The replacement of one "hegemonic" power in the world system by another, younger, more vigorous nation is both a rare event and one of such importance for the international order that it naturally attracts great interest, both at the time and in retrospect. When that act of succession takes place steadily and peacefully, rather than as a result of a war between the declining and rising state; and when the two countries involved share a common language and at least parts of the same political culture – especially as measured against other political cultures – it is also not surprising that such an unusually pacific transfer of leadership produces its own mythology. So pervasive, in fact, has this mythology been in the case of the Anglo-American axis of power in the twentieth century that even today's presidents and prime ministers still invoke the term "special relationship", despite the increasing evidence that many of the earlier ties have been eroded and that even in the fabled "golden age" of Whitehall-Washington amity there were multitudinous reasons for disagreement. Indeed, the more historians have been able to use British and American governmental archives, the more the mutual suspicion and manoeuvring for advantage behind the facade of wartime cooperation and peacetime platitudes is stressed – so much so that, on occasions, all the positive aspects of the relationship seem quite forgotten.

D. Cameron Watt's latest book, *Succeeding John Bull*, is neither a simple tale of Anglo-American relations in the mythological, harmonious tradition, nor another exercise in debunking. The subtitle (or perhaps it is the sub-sub-title) reads: "A study of the Anglo-American relationship and world politics in the context of British and American foreign-policy-making in the twentieth century"; but even that is not enough. Essentially, his book is concerned with the way in which the decision-makers in Britain and the United States perceived each other. He argues persuasively, that their perceptions were not monolithic and static but complex and shifting, depending upon changing circumstances like the Great Depression or the onset of the Cold War, though even more upon generational changes, as new groups within the two élites rose to influence and tried to impose their "mental maps" of the world upon their nation's external policy.

The result of Professor Watt's approach is a book which is richly suggestive and original, and highly sophisticated. Not only is the Anglo-American relationship shown to be in a near-constant flux, but because the relative power of each country is shifting, and because of events occurring elsewhere; it is also changing because different political, economic and bureaucratic sub-groups gain or lose influence, and because new generations (each with different "learning phases") begin to affect decision-making. Even within each of the seven chronologically ordered chapters, which usually cover about fifteen years of the Anglo-American relationship, there are sub-phases and sub-periods when new shifts in policies and perceptions are held to have occurred. This kaleidoscopic tale is told by the author with great authority, based upon a vast amount of sources, some original, but most of them specialized monographs, articles and dissertations. Very few historical writings seem to have escaped Watt's keen eye and ear, or have not in some way been integrated into this thought-provoking synthesis.

In the eyes of fellow-historians, dissatisfied with stereotyped presentations of British and American foreign policies, and requiring an up-to-date analysis which takes account of chronological and social changes within the Anglo-American relationship, Watt's achievement will seem a considerable one. It also ought to be enlightening to today's politicians, especially those of an older generation who were brought up in the shadow of the Churchill-Roosevelt alliance (or even the Kennedy-McCumber alliance) and who now find it

difficult to comprehend the changes which have taken place since those times.

It needs to be said, however, that this is scarcely a book for the beginner, whether a student or an unhistorical politician. It does not, for example, actually describe the various ways in which America took Britain's place, either in terms of industrial production or in the US Sixth Fleet's replacement of the Royal Navy's battle-squadrons as the chief Western naval force in the Mediterranean. Rather, it assumes in the reader a knowledge of the historical events which the decision-makers in the two countries perceived and discussed – just as it assumes a considerable background understanding of the domestic politics, cultural up-bringsings, and institutional arrangements on each side of the Atlantic which most influenced those policy-makers. In this text allusions, stimulating suggestions, knowing remarks, and tersely phrased *obiter dicta* lie side by side. In some parts even well-read scholars may have to go slowly, and read very carefully, through sentences as dense as (for example) the one explaining the rise of the Paris-Bonn axis in the late 1950s: "It was American and British equivocation over the Berlin issue, raised by the Krushchev 'ultimatum' of November 1958, which made it possible for de Gaulle to exploit Dr Adenauer's fears that German aspirations might become the sacrificial lamb in an American-Soviet settlement".

To be sure, Watt is dealing with immensely complicated events, and seeking to offer a sustained intellectual commentary upon a whole host of ever-fluctuating variables in the Anglo-

Losing streak

R. B. Smith

ARNOLD R. ISAACS
Without Honor: Defeat in Vietnam and Cambodia
559pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £15.
080183060 5

The subject of this book is defined in its opening words: "the conclusion of America's military effort in Vietnam, the failure of an illusory peace agreement... the collapse of US backed armies in South Vietnam and Cambodia, and the Communist conquest of all of Indochina" – all of which happened in the period between spring 1972 and spring 1975. The author spent most of that period in Indochina as a journalist, so that his starting-point is first-hand experience of the war. Subsequently he has undertaken a considerable amount of documentary research, and the length of his very useful bibliography testifies to the thoroughness with which he has approached the task of writing a history of those years. He has produced a sound and interesting narrative, which succeeds in combining vivid images of the war with the statistics and analysis that are essential for historical perspective.

But it is an American view of Indochina, based for the most part on American sources. There is little discussion of relations between North Vietnam, China and the rest of the Communist world, and the omission is the more serious because the principal consequences of American defeat and withdrawal was to make those relations more significant than ever. Sino-Vietnamese tensions, which split over into open conflict and war during 1978-9, were already a vitally important aspect of the situation as early as 1973-4. But although Isaacs makes passing reference to the international diplomatic background from time to time, he does not attempt any systematic analysis of either North Vietnamese or Chinese perceptions of the conflict. He falls back on the American habit of seeking to explain everything in terms of the mistakes of American decision-makers, and their Asian allies. Yet it is unlikely that what happened in Cambodia and South Vietnam after 1972 can be fully understood without looking much more carefully at revolutionary rivalries on the Communist side, where Soviet as well as Chinese ambitions must ultimately be taken into account.

A central theme of the book is the making and unmaking of the Paris Agreement on ending the war in Vietnam, negotiated by Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho and finally signed in

American relationship over three-quarters of a century. But one wishes on occasions that the text had been expanded – not merely in those places where Watt's cryptic remarks are so intriguing that one is keen to know more, but also where elaboration would clearly help the general reader and the student's understanding of the historical context. Such expansion could, if necessary, have been at the cost of the three additional essays on special aspects of Anglo-American relations, which although very interesting and informative (eg. Chapter 10, "Britain, America and Indo-China, 1942-1945") lie outside the main text but occupy nearly two-fifths of this book.

Succeeding John Bull is superbly produced by the publisher, and accompanied by a most useful bibliography of over thirty pages. There are very few misprints ("Sproat" for "Sprout", and Admiral Mahan is consistently misspelt); and the entire work is – despite the denseness of the text – satisfying, stimulating and important. It has the additional benefit that, having convincingly shown the many nuances and different phases within the Anglo-American relationship, at the end of it all Professor Watt is brave enough to offer "Some Tentative Conclusions", a section which not only makes useful generalizations (eg. that the relationship was in certain ways "special" to both sides) but also throws out further suggestive ideas about the nature of international relations and how they should be studied historically. In sum, this book adds substantially to the literature on Anglo-American relations, as well as enriching the study of international history as a whole.

January 1973. The author raises the question whether Nixon and Kissinger ever had any justification for hoping that the Agreement would produce a genuine ceasefire; and thus succeed in stabilizing the situation in Indochina while allowing the Saigon government of Nguyen Van Thieu to survive indefinitely. The sense of inevitability about eventual American defeat, which pervaded the whole period after 1968 (and was deliberately fostered by Communist propaganda), made it easy to believe that Kissinger's hopes even for a "decent interval" were quite unrealistic. Sitting in a bar in Saigon in June 1972, I was assured by an American official that the North Vietnamese offensive currently under way would be defeated; but "next time" – in effect, whenever Hanoi might choose – it would be different. There was no "hindsight" in that prediction – and it came true. But whether the actual outcome really was completely inevitable is another matter. Since Isaacs finished his book, the memoirs of the Communist general Tran Van Tra have revealed that a major debate in Hanoi, in March 1973, almost ended in a decision to scale down military activity in the South and to concentrate on the reconstruction of North Vietnam – using the aid promised by President Nixon in his letter to Pham Van Dong soon after the Agreement was signed. Had such a decision been taken there might indeed have been a real ceasefire, and everything else might have turned out very differently.

The flaw in the Paris Agreement was that it failed to produce a parallel ceasefire in Cambodia, whose political future was already the focal point of Sino-Vietnamese rivalry. The North Vietnamese were not ready to stop the fighting there until they controlled the Cambodian revolution as firmly as they already controlled the Pathet Lao in Laos. Isaacs is quite right in saying that the Americans were over-optimistic in believing they could force a diplomatic solution in Cambodia at a time when they were militarily in retreat. He may be somewhat unfair in failing to acknowledge that that was not Dr Kissinger's fault; nor, for that matter, was it the fault of Sihanouk or of Zhou Enlai. The essential cause of the failure of the Paris Agreement, and of the tragedy in Cambodia, was Hanoi's ambition to control the whole of Indochina – which it now does, more or less. If one has a criticism of this book, it is that Mr Isaacs is more concerned with castigating failures on the part of the United States than with understanding the harsh realities of the Communist strategy before which the Americans were obliged to retreat. In its own terms none the less, it is a good book.

Going with the tide

R. Jeffreys-Jones

RICHARD D. MAHONEY
JFK: Ordeal in Africa
338pp. Oxford University Press. £16.
019503341 8

Kwame Nkrumah was obsessed, by 1963, with the idea that the CIA was plotting against him. This is not surprising. In 1961, the Agency had cultivated good relations with Ghanaians opposed to the Nkrumah regime, who had banded together in neighbouring Togo. According to *JFK: Ordeal in Africa*, the US ambassador to Ghana "might well have agreed" with Nkrumah's warning that the CIA would have to be watched carefully. The ambassador in question was William P. Mahoney, Jr, an associate of President John F. Kennedy's with a commitment to civil rights and other liberal causes. Such a commitment could also be discerned in his son, Richard D. Mahoney is an aspiring anti-Goldwaterite politician in Arizona, and his book is a defence of one important aspect of the Kennedy administration.

According to Dr Mahoney, President Kennedy deserves praise for having recognized the tide of nationalism in Africa. Kennedy would have liked to throw the weight of American diplomacy behind it but because he was a cautious man, he refrained from what his friend David Ormsby Gore (now Lord Harlech) later described as the "fatality of activism". The problem was that support for a nationalist cause in Africa might undermine the stability of a Nato ally in Europe, or in other ways play into the hands of the Soviet Union, whose leaders were launching their own initiatives in the emergent African continent.

Portugal was a case in point. Salazar was an ideological liability to Nato and the United States. As usual, the CIA had a removal plan but a coup might produce a preemptive invasion from Spain, an even more conservative government, or a Communist regime in Lisbon – all with unpredictable consequences in Angola, and for the militarily strategic Azores. So Kennedy did nothing.

Mahoney believes that Kennedy reconciled "African ideals" and "American self-interest" as "no other American president before or after him has done". He was particularly successful in steering the Congo (now Zaire) away from the twin perils of fragmentation and socialism. Mahoney reapplies Gibbon's verdict on Belisarius: "His imperfections flowed from the contagion of the times; his virtues were his own." He stresses the President's humanitarian feelings and the dismay that the death of a foe could arouse in him.

With the object of showing how Kennedy suffered the "ordeal" of African "realities" but emerged with credit, Mahoney has organized his book around what he believes were the young President's main African crises: the Congo, Ghana and Angola; America's major problems with South Africa; and with the French in Algeria do not receive any special treatment. On the other hand, what is covered is well researched: the account is based on over two hundred interviews as well as on numerous transcripts of tape-recorded presidential telephone calls and on conventional archival sources.

Mahoney is not alone in blaming the CIA for things that went wrong in Africa, as a reading of Madeleine G. Kalb's *Congo Cables* (1982) will confirm. A number of local CIA men do seem to have taken steps unconvincing to the success of Kennedy liberalism, for example, advice that contributed to Lumumba's death. Some Americans, however, will question the overall objectivity of Mahoney's account. In the light of various anti-Castro operations after 1961, they will ask whether the authorizations issued to the CIA by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy differed all that markedly. British readers removed from that particular historiographical fray may well marvel at another feature of Mr Mahoney's account: its apparent confirmation of some American liberals' continuing need to believe in Camelot.

Movements of the spirit

Stephen Fender

PATRICIA CALDWELL
The Puritan Conversion Narrative: The beginnings of American expression
210pp. Cambridge University Press. £17.50.
0521 254604

"How shall we see clearly the nature of sin in his naked hue?" asked the seventeenth-century Puritan minister Thomas Hooker in a sermon delivered in Hartford, Connecticut. Well, sin is "that which makes a separation between God and the soul" and "brings an incapability in regard of God Himself to work any spiritual good". Not to put too fine a point on it, "it's the cause which brings all other evils of punishment into the world", and it "brings a curse to all our comforts". "Hence", he concludes triumphantly, "it follows that sin is the greatest evil in the world, or indeed that can be."

Yes, well, but how about my sin? How can I recognize that? Congregationalist soteriology, disallowing the efficacy of good works and disdaining the Popish mechanism of "auricular" confession, had grown out of the habit of analysing human behaviour with much specificity. Yet a millennial community in the American wilderness had to form some test for admission to the visible Church, since that body of people also provided the government of the new settlements. Even Hooker himself, for whom the visible Churches were but "husks and shells" while "the kernel and spirit of life lie in a hidden society", had to admit that "it is neither good nor safe to pluck away from the visible church of saints... their very vitals and cordials, which is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost breathing amongst them".

The test for admission supported by Hooker, Thomas Shepard and other New England divines was a sort of reinvented confessional, only this time a "relation" uttered by the aspir-

ing communicant before the congregation that he or she sought to enter. But how was the applicant to proceed? A recitation of the articles of faith, or a liturgical sing-song of the operations of grace upon the spirit, would be a resort to Arminian mechanism, while a wholly personal, subjective and excitable outburst of the candidate's conviction of salvation would tend towards the dangerous enthusiasm of the Antinomians already "threatening" New England's stability. There was also the less theoretical inhibition against telling private sins, and private convictions of salvation, in public.

These contradictions form the context of Patricia Caldwell's stimulating and difficult book. It is an old subject in American studies, which she makes newly relevant by focusing on the rhetorical problems set by the process of the conversion relation and by asking interesting questions about its implications for a characteristically American narrative style. For what she shows, through a suggestive process of close analysis, is that when certain English congregations adopted the colonial practice of conversion relations, the results were subtly, yet significantly different.

Taking two bodies of data, a record made by Thomas Shepard of fifty-one "confessions" in his Cambridge, Massachusetts, congregation, and three collections of relations made to English congregations in Rotterdam, Dublin and London, Caldwell shows that the English accounts were far more confident than their colonial counterparts. They charted the movement of the spirit frankly in terms of personal crises and comforts. Though admitting the inexpressibility of the experience of conversion, the English candidates were content to employ stock phrases of spiritual conversion like "brought in the room of his grace", "Christ... who is all in all" and the "way of Christ, for believers to walk in". When they cited scripture, it was fragmentarily, when a text occurred that illustrated a comfort. Finally, "The

Englishman ends his conversion narrative with one foot in heaven", while "his brother starts out for heaven but gets sidetracked in New England".

That New England, at least according to the Shepard narratives, is a misty no man's land where little can be known (or at least told) and nothing comes to fruition. The personal details are uncertainly, even vaguely alluded to, rather than specified. Stock phrases are absent, perhaps avoided as Arminian incantation. Scripture is not cited as might be expected. For example, there is very little about sailing the Atlantic as a crossing of the Red Sea to the promised land - that would come later and at a higher "cultural" level in the official histories like Cotton Mather's *Magnalia* - but instead of being picked up and dropped as suited the outlines of the narrative, the Bible began to take over the American relations, displacing the physical space of New England itself. In the American narratives, the personal merges "into the public figure of Israel", but the stories identify "more with the wayward Jews in Hosea", with the exiled and suffering Jews, than with the Jews as God's chosen people.

Caldwell argues a number of reasons for these differences without indicating a very strong order of her preference, and without entirely managing to discriminate between the American case and the English. For instance, she mentions the problem of specifying sins and evidence of salvation within a predestinarian system, and the difficulty of communicating sincere experience while treading a thin dividing line between inarticulacy and volubility - both of which could be taken as signs of an unregenerate condition. But because they shared the same soteriological system, the English applicants should have faced these problems too. The question is really: why should the inherent contradictions of Puritan confession have been felt so much more acutely

across the Atlantic than in Europe?

It may be because, as Caldwell suggests, the whole New England project was so heated. Theological debate, as promulgated by Hooker, Shepard and John Cotton in this very issue of church membership, was intense, and the expectations of a new order, a new land so high, that the natural feeling of anticlimax after immigration might be lessened by a sense of unworthiness to belong. "In short", writes Caldwell, "to feel that appointment in America was a sin." There was also the featurelessness of the place, and at least until the Indian war later in the century a want of the dramatic dangers faced by the Americans' English contemporaries in the Civil War. American Puritans failed to find, says Caldwell (herself finding a phrase from perhaps now too-numinous text), "an objective correlative".

Another possibility, of course, is that the American Puritans were disoriented by finding many of their traditional figures of speech such as wandering in "the way of Christ" through a "wilderness" until they come to the "Promised Land" - not to mention the endlessly absent crossing of the sea - suddenly made literal. Perhaps this perplexing confusion of tenor and vehicle contributed as much as any other factor to their rhetorical hesitations. Then again, perhaps their problem was not their American condition so much as the demoralizing influence of their severe and highly strung minister. Patricia Caldwell's sample, after all, is largely restricted to relations made by Shepard's congregation.

All these reservations need to be mentioned. Yet *The Puritan Conversion Narrative*, with its own narrative line might have been less combed out, is an essential contribution to a perplexing subject, and a worthy addition to the new Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture.

Observing the social game

J. M. Cocking

MARCEL PROUST
Correspondance: Tome X, 1910-1911
Edited by Philip Kolb
443pp. Paris: PUF. 150 fr.
2259010296
JEAN-YVES TADIÉ
Proust
330pp. Paris: Belfond. 89 fr.
27144 16292
TERENCE KILMARTIN
A Guide to Proust: Remembrance of things past
200pp. Chatto and Windus. £8.95.
0701126361
PASCAL ALAIN IFRÍ
Proust et son narrateur
251pp. Geneva: Droz.

After the uncertainty, self-searching and frustration of Proust's literary efforts of 1908 came the breakthrough of 1909. In 1910 and 1911, as his manuscripts show, Proust was still constantly changing the details of his arrangement of the material, but his overall plan was now confidently and firmly set. 1910 began with a setback. He had hoped for serial publication in *Le Figaro*, and in 1909 had sent in the beginning of the novel as it then stood; but the editor, Calmette, turned it down. Proust was bitterly disappointed, and convinced himself that he had annoyed Calmette by getting in touch first with the literary editor, Beauquier; as Philip Kolb points out, he was in the end better off without the constraints of serial publication.

Complaints about his health, and neurotic

anxieties and suspicions continue; but, on the one hand, the letters seem to be fewer, even allowing for lost items, and on the other they are more cheerful - sometimes even sprightly. However often he asserts that his working time is limited, he reiterates that the end is in sight. The famous cork lining was installed in his bedroom in 1910 and, though it brought allergic troubles, it effectively shut Proust within the world of his imagination. He emerged from it less and less. When he did, he became the observer and recorder of a social game in which he had once been an eager and anxious player; sometimes as detached, now, as a naturalist, sometimes malicious, with a keen and even cruel eye for the comic.

Two letters to Reynaldo Hahn in November and December 1911 show the two extremes of the sensibility he wrote into the novel. In the first, whimsically addressed to Hahn's new dog Zadiq, he shows how clearly he is aware of the qualities of feeling that had made him a "suffering and adoring" child and were now finding expression in the lyricism of his writing, and implies that his intellectual and literary interests were at once a refuge from anguish and a substitute for direct response to life. In the second, his account of meeting, at an exhibition of Chinese art, a former acquaintance now diminished, distorted and made more foolish by age is like the cruellest passages of the *bal de rétes* in *Le Temps retrouvé*. The peculiar savour of some of his characteristically stylish passages comes from their blend of sweet and acid.

There are many new letters in this volume, including a gem from Montesquiou reproaching Proust for liking Francis Jammes

and telling him that his reported decline in health is due to this lapse of taste in literature, unless his health explains the lapse. The appendix includes several of those Proust wrote to Anna de Noailles in 1906. Not only do new letters come into the editor's hands; Kolb is as devoted to the proper presentation of Proust's correspondence as Proust was to the construction of his novel. Ever vigilant, he sometimes has second thoughts about dating. One letter is here transferred from 1909 to 1911 and another set back from 1908 to 1903. But there is little doubt about the most important features of this chronology so devotedly and revealingly established and which has now reached the most interesting part of Proust's creative life.

Jean-Yves Tadié has compressed a great quantity and variety of information into his latest book. First come established facts and probable conjectures about the composition of *A la recherche* and the relation of the various manuscript books to the printed text, and about Proust's acquaintance with books, architecture, painting and music. The last section is a substantial year-by-year summary of the events in Proust's life that are most relevant to the history of the novel and its contents. In between come chapters on the general characteristics of *A la recherche*, on the content of all his published works and on the history of critical approaches to Proust. A select but unbiased bibliography completes a succinct, precise and objective work of reference, which an index would have made yet more useful.

Another thoroughly researched and clearly presented reference-book is Terence Kilmartin's guide to his revised translation of *A la*

recherche. The groundwork for this was done by P.A. Spalding in his *Reader's Handbook to Proust* (1952), revised by R.H. Cortie in 1975. This referred, of course, to the original twelve volumes of the Scott-Moncreiff translation as completed by Stephen Hudson. Kilmartin says he has used also the French repertoires of Daudet and Celly, Nathan's dictionary of quotations and references, and the very full index to the Pléiade edition of the French text of the novel. There are four sections: "characters", "persons", "places" and "themes". The compiler shows a preference for the concrete over the abstract; some of Spalding's more "philosophical" topics are not to be found. Other entries are often fuller, and Kilmartin's choice is no doubt more useful for the general reader who wants to find his way among the characters and through the narrative.

Pascal Alain Ifrí's book, conceived as an academic thesis, can be used as a base for exploring ideas about how novelists imagine their readers and how readers react to the narrator's persuasions. In the vocabulary of narratology, the author's notional reader is the "narrataire" or "narratee". Ifrí does his unremitting best to distinguish a theoretical "narratee" written into the text from the more familiar "ideal reader". The difference is not made very clear, and Ifrí registers some rather glib generalizations, like the assertion of one feminist critic that most great novels cannot be quite imaginatively assimilated by women readers. Proust's narratee, we are told, is male but perhaps not very virile. But there are some interesting ideas, and an abundance of references to relevant areas in the new critical theories of France and America.

Figures in the carpet

Miranda Seymour

MARCIA JACOBSON
Henry James and the Mass Market
189pp. University of Alabama Press. \$17.50.
0817301453
SERGIO PEROSA
Henry James and the Experimental Novel
219pp. New York University Press. \$18.
0814763793
PAUL B. ARMSTRONG
The Phenomenology of Henry James
242pp. University of North Carolina Press.
£25.10.
080781556X
ALAN SELSTON (Editor)
Henry James: Washington Square and The Portrait of a Lady
210pp. Macmillan. £14 (paperback, £5.95)
0333 294602

Henry James was not a best-seller. That he never vulgarized himself would be more admirable if we could imagine him capable of doing so. His view of his sacred art placed it well above the head of the average novel-reader who, while susceptible to moral instruction, desired above all to be entertained.

That is a received view. Marcia Jacobson in *Henry James and the Mass Market* makes a somewhat arresting but not wholly convincing case for seeing James as a man avidly in pursuit of wider fame, a man for whom the Olympian Master was an assumed persona. Her general argument is that the topics of his London books were those which he had seen as drawing the biggest audiences for his commercially-minded contemporaries. Nevertheless, in her view, he remained torn between the wish for a large readership and his own high sense of the morality which lies in the novelist's quality of mind, not in the moral vision that he sets, attractively garnished, before his audience.

The problem with Jacobson's thesis is that, while performing the useful task of setting *What Maisie Knew* in a time when childish consciousness was a booming subject, and *The Awkward Age* among a spate of sprightly dialogue novels; she can only conjecture as to the

market-gauging interest of James in the books she names. She suggests Gissing as a spur to *The Princess Casamassima*, but there is no real evidence that James had been reading him at that time, let alone with an eye to increasing his own sales. It is, moreover, the case that Jacobson's eagerness to show James working in but also against the fashions leads her to some strange conclusions. Her view, for example, that *The Princess Casamassima* was intended to be an antidote to the facile optimism of the working-class novel appears to undermine the proposition that Gissing, the least cheerful of novelists, was one of James's principal sources. And, skilful though she is in allying James to popular literature, she is a bit weak in her judgment of his own works. To say of *The Princess Casamassima* that "James could have written his own novel only as he did" is to offer an unremarkable truth.

"I have a constant impulse to try out new experiments of form", James wrote to his brother William in 1878. A quotation from *The Sacred Fount* might have stood without shame at the front of Sergio Perosa's splendid and blessedly lucid study of James the experimentalist. The first part of *Henry James and the Experimental Novel* is devoted to the middle period of James's novels which Perosa divides into the pre and post-dramatic period. *The Bostonians*, *The Princess Casamassima* and *The Tragic Muse* are seen as limited experiments in the naturalistic mode, executed largely in accordance with the theories put forward in *The Art of Fiction*, *The Other House*, *The Spoils of Poynton*, *What Maisie Knew* and *The Awkward Age* are held to be more strictly and avowedly experimental in their combination of dramatic objectivity with the subjective point of view.

From this somewhat familiar terrain Perosa makes a sortie to the proposition that *The Sacred Fount* is a bleak repudiation of the idea that art can rival or dominate life. It is, he suggests, a forerunner of the *nouveau roman*, a work dedicated to destroying even as it creates the illusion of building. It is not sure that Perosa's explanation solves the riddle of this most infuriatingly veiled of fictions, but it does offer a new way of approaching it.

In the chapter he contributed to *The Whole Family* and in his two unfinished novels, *The Sense of the Past* and *The Ivory Tower*, James's method, argues Perosa, was "at work to enhance, but at the same time to check and jeopardize the possibilities of the novel". Rightly and not without humour, Perosa shows how, in *The Whole Family*, James's prose reaches out like a great carnivorous plant to encompass the efforts of his unfortunate collaborators and to bring the book firmly and inextricably into his own territory. In relating *The Ivory Tower's* looming omissions to the precise scenario of the Notebooks, he makes a striking case for seeing absence as a virtue, "a subtler form of presence" threatening the reader with knowledge felt but not expressed. From here it is a very short step to the final presentation of James as the father of Modernism, a driving force behind the novels of Joyce, Mann, Beckett and Gass.

The phenomenological interpretation of James's work is now very much in fashion and *The Phenomenology of Henry James* is to be welcomed for offering a clear and balanced exposition of a rather murky area of criticism. The epistemological foundations of Jamesian ethics have been examined by such eminent critics as Dorothea Krook and F.W. Dupee. J.H. Raleigh and Quentin Anderson have interpreted and to some degree re-written his books from another philosophical point of view. The phenomenological approach, based on the writings of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, concentrates on James's belief that the epistemological and the moral are a single concern, and argues that for him, as for phenomenologists, morality and truth derive from lived experience. It is not a question of what Maisie knew or whether, finally, she is in a state of moral depravity or triumph, but of how she knew.

The tractable reader will find Armstrong's overall interpretations of the novels rewarding and illuminating. *Roderick Hudson* becomes a crisis of the extravagant imagination as defined by Blin Swanger. The social world in which Maisie struggles to survive is one of Heideggerian conflict and care. The Ververs, the Prides and Charlotte are locked in Sartrean warfare.

The more sceptical reader may be prepared to accept that *The Golden Bowl* can be partially interpreted in the light of Husserl's idea that each of us aggressively brings our own experience to the same things (so that Maggie's vision of the drawing-room scene is different from, and threatened by, Charlotte's). *The Portrait of a Lady's* conclusion does seem more richly satisfying if we accept that Isabel's self-conscious experience of her marital bondage gives her a kind of freedom within it.

It is not clear whether we do well to accept Armstrong's extra-literary claims. I doubt whether he is on strong ground in saying that William James is seen by our philosophical brethren as a founder of American phenomenology, or that Henry was giving the phenomenologists licence to claim him for one of their own when he told William: "Phenomenologically, in short, I am with you." Phenomenology offers an interesting way of examining James's interest in knowing and doing, but I do not think we are in a sufficient state of knowledge to say that James's work was consciously in the phenomenological tradition.

The views collected in the latest of the excellent Casebook series seem soothingly territorial after the flights of Perosa and Armstrong. Mary McCarthy (1948) offers a rollicking *Washington Square* as a pantheistic celebration in which "the hills are skipping with Catherine", while John Lucas (1972) finds it a scalpel-sharp dissection of New York society beside which the English world of *The Portrait of a Lady* seems weak pastiche; Tony Tanner (1965) puts an inclusive case for seeing *The Portrait of a Lady* in terms of Kant's worlds of ends and means, with Isabel's tragedy lying in her having aimed at the higher only to find herself a puppet of the lower. The most striking contribution comes from Nina Baym (1976) whose meticulous comparison of the 1881 and 1908 versions leads her to view the Preface as dedicated to seducing the reader away from the bright quickness of the earlier Isabel to the more introspective and less immediately attractive character she becomes in 1906. It is the most instructive piece on the danger of placing too ready a faith in an author's evaluation of his own work.

Fishing for memories

Peter Fawcett

ROGER MARTIN DU GARD
Le Lieutenant-Colonel de Maumort
Edited by André Daspre
1,316pp. Paris: Gallimard. 270fr.
2070110664

When Martin du Gard died in 1958, he left behind him a vast trunkful of manuscripts relating to the novel he had been working on for the last seventeen years of his life. These have now been sorted and sifted by André Daspre, proving himself to be "la personne dévouée et laborieuse" the author recognized as necessary to the task, and this splendid critical edition is the result of his efforts.

Two years after the completion of *Les Thibaults*, during a sleepless night in 1941, Martin du Gard conceived the project of a diary kept by a septuagenarian colonel confined to a single room in his château by the occupying German forces and remembering his past. It was to be a "livre somme", reflecting all his contemporary preoccupations and displaying some of the qualities Gide and others found in his personal writings but which were so far lacking in his fiction. From the start, however, he ran into difficulties with the form he had chosen. As long as Maumort commented on current events, it was impossible to distinguish between him and his creator. Whence Martin du Gard felt the need to embark on a "gigantesque travail préparatoire", which suited his gifts as a novelist and involved providing not only his protagonist but each of the major characters in his life with a full biography.

After the war, the perspective having changed, he decided to begin the diary in 1945 instead of 1940 and altered his hero's date of birth from 1866 to 1870. Gradually the diary gave place to memoirs, though the final form imagined for the novel was that of letters. Following his wife's death in 1949, he confessed to Olde: "J'ai passé l'âge des grandes entreprises", and, with his own health beginning to fail, it became increasingly clear that the work would never be finished.

The largest and most complete section of the book consists of Maumort's memoirs of his first twenty-five years up to the time of his marriage. Particular emphasis is placed on his sexual education, about which he states his intention to "tout dire franchement, griment". After listening to the confidences of his friends

and reading the reports of sexologists, Martin du Gard wanted to show that masturbation was an inevitable part of adolescence and he dwells at length on the "liberté de mœurs incroyable" Maumort finds in the boarding-school to which he is sent at the age of fifteen. He is careful to stress that Maumort is a perfectly normal, healthy individual. Aware that this aspect of the work risked upsetting its balance and shocking some readers, he even thought of publishing these chapters separately in a limited edition. Nowadays such a precaution would appear unnecessary. The one example of genuine homosexuality in the book, drawn from the diary of Maumort's former tutor, Xavier de Balcourt, is a brief romantic idyll which ends in drowning and a suicide.

Maumort's intellectual development is of equal importance. His arrival in Paris at eighteen to live with his uncle and aunt Chambost-Lévadé, while preparing for Saint-Cyr, brings him into contact with a world of exceptional brilliance. His uncle Eric himself, based on the strange and enigmatic character of Paul Desjardins, founder of the famous *déca des Pontignys*, is a member of the Institut de France. Among the regular visitors to his house who appear in the novel are Renan, Taine, Berthelot and Brunetière.

It is for his picture of this outstanding intellectual milieu, at a time when France, we are told, "a vécu sous le régime le plus libre, de beaucoup, qu'elle ait jamais connu", that the novel may be chiefly read. Little subsists, unfortunately, of Maumort's planned later career, his resignation over the Dreyfus Affair, his campaigns with Lyautéy in Morocco, his subsequent work with the Resistance. But there is more to the novel than this. We must be grateful to M. Daspre for publishing, alongside the chapters he has successfully constructed out of the various fragments, a selection from the numerous "dossiers" formed in preparation for the novel and which alone give it its proper dimension.

Maumort was conceived originally as "un vieil Erasme libéral révenu de l'exil". Later he was modelled to some extent on Vaubert, a man of action and a thinker. But above all it is Montaigne who lurks in the background to the novel. Both Maumort and Martin du Gard felt themselves to be "dépouillés" by the post-war world of Existentialism and "engagés", which seemed like a return to the fan-

ticism of the Wars of Religion. The importance of this last novel to Martin du Gard was that, "piètre penseur" though he considered himself to be, he wished to include in it, in the manner of the "grand sceptique", all the notes and observations he had accumulated over forty years and which appear in the "dossiers". Maumort was the *alter ego* who would make this ambition possible.

It is doubtful if Martin du Gard could ever have fully reconciled the conflicting demands of fiction and self-expression, as he saw them, in this instance. But no matter. His stately, classical prose, here at its most expansive, is a joy to read and his belief that "il y a plus de

vérité dans le souvenir que dans la notation quotidienne" lends the work a Proustian flavour, nowhere more so than in a memorable page where Maumort compares his fishing for memories with childhood angling with his sister. It can indeed be seen as a cross between *A la recherche du temps perdu* and the *Essais* of Montaigne. If Martin du Gard's first major novel, *Jean Barois*, invites comparison with Michelangelo's "Rebellious Slave" in the Louvre which was its original frontispiece, his last calls to mind the "Slaves" in the Accademia in Florence, all the more moving for the contrast between their emerging form and the raw material from which they are partly hewn.

Inventing zero

W. D. Redfern

JEAN GIONO
Oeuvres romanesques complètes VI
Edited by Robert Ricatte and others
1,248pp. Paris: Gallimard. 270 fr.
2070110710

This sixth Pléiade volume of Giono contains: *Deux Cavaliers de l'orage*, *Le Déserteur*, *L'Iris de Suse* (reviewed in the TLS on April 16, 1970); the unfinished texts: *Cœurs*, *passions*, *caractères*, *Dragon* and *Olympe* (TLS, October 8, 1982); maps of the localities figuring in Giono's fiction (a truly luxurious superfluity, as the entire editorial team acknowledge that Giono constantly aggrandizes, telescopes or otherwise transcends topography and indeed historical time-scales); and a selective bibliography of mainly recent studies on Giono. The critical apparatus of variants, explanatory notes and accounts of the gestation of the

works is fully up to the level of the previous volumes and indeed in the best Pléiade tradition. Some of the critical essays, especially those of Pierre Citron on *Ennemonde*, and Robert and Luce Ricatte (respectively) on *Deux Cavaliers de l'orage* and *L'Iris de Suse* are major contributions to an understanding of Giono's creation.

Citron is especially acute on the multiple exploitation of the impersonal pronoun *on*, and its place in Giono's later experiments with narrative strategies. His remark that Giono not only peoples real spaces with his own fantasies but also depopulates them chimes in with the argument of Robert and Luce Ricatte that the stripping-down or withholding of psychological motivation characterizes these final texts. An alternative title to *L'Iris de Suse*, "L'Invention du zéro", lends substance to their claim that zero, in Giono's hands, is not a purely negating concept but rather a multiplier of possibilities.

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The church-to-come

David Robey

PETER ARMOUR
The Door of Purgatory: A study of multiple symbolism in Dante's *Purgatorio*. 225pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £15. 0198157878

From the fourteenth century to the present day almost all commentators on the *Divine Comedy* have explained the episode of the door of Purgatory, in *Purgatorio* IX, as an allegory of the Catholic sacrament of confession and penance. The angel guardian has been read as an exemplary priest confessor, Dante himself as the penitent and his passage through the door as the ritual of contrition, absolution and satisfaction. This interpretation has had an important implication for the understanding of the poem as a whole. By making such a structurally significant episode refer primarily to an earthly institution, it has encouraged the inclination of many readers to see the work as another Pilgrim's Progress, as dealing with the moral and spiritual life in this world more than with events in the next.

Peter Armour's new study is a detailed, forceful and suggestive argument for a new interpretation of the episode resting on a different view of the meaning of the whole poem.

Inclining to the left

J. R. Woodhouse

MICHAEL CAESAR and PETER HAINSWORTH (Editors)
Writers and Society in Contemporary Italy. 289pp. Berg Publishers, 24 Binswood Avenue, Warwick. £18. 0907582125

This well-produced collection analyses the main literary debates conducted in Italy after 1945, and more particularly after 1956. The editors' introductory essay concerns "The transformation of post-war Italy", the second essay, by Christopher Wagstaff, focuses on the "Neo-avantgarde". Nine further essays, each by a separate contributor, are devoted to some of Italy's more interesting post-war writers. Close collaboration and mutual criticism are discernible throughout, notably in integrated

cross-references. Each essay summarizes and discusses an author's major works, with individual appendices of biographical notes and brief but adequate bibliographies. All quotations are translated into English.

Of the nine writers considered, Umberto Eco is arguably the most successful entrepreneur, spinning gold from straw, and dazzling many of his contemporaries in the process. David Robey's lucid exposition of Eco's semiotic theories, while "enthusiastic" about his achievement, keeps in perspective the limitations of the method. Franco Fortini's clever political statements and esoteric compositions are well summarized by David Forgács, and credit given for his success in prose and verse, alienated though Fortini might have been by his various earlier changes of political allegiance. Andrea Zanzotto, by contrast, seems so indifferent to allegiance of any kind as to withdraw into a private haven of rural dialect and primary-school imagery, from which, as

With Erich Auerbach, he sees Dante's afterlife not as an allegorical veil but as a heightened, more real version of life on earth; as Auerbach put it, in the *Comedy* our existence here below is a *figura* or prefiguration which only finds its fulfilment in the world after death. On this basis Armour argues persuasively that Dante conceived of Purgatory as another, parallel Church, a truer and more perfect form of its corrupt earthly equivalent; that the angel guardian of this Church is not an allegorical priest confessor but an ideal version of the Pope, a second, uncorrupt vicar of St Peter; and that Dante's passage through the door is not the allegorical representation of something ordinary, but the literal description of something quite exceptional: the entry of a living being into the Purgatorial Church, admission to which belongs only to the souls of those who have found salvation after death.

One advantage of Armour's thesis is therefore that of extending and corroborating the literal reading of the poem. Against the reductive tendency of the allegorical interpretation, it brings out the dramatic strangeness of Dante's account of his journey, the extraordinary audacity of his insistence on having seen and participated in the life of the world to come. The shift to a literal reading of the episode also leads Armour to find in it, paradoxically, new levels of meaning of a more individual and historically relevant kind than that

which the allegorical reading proposed. These new levels, the "multiple symbolism" of his subtitle, occupy a large part of Armour's discussion and are a major source of interest in the book. Through them the analysis of a single brief passage is made to cast an interesting new light on the political meaning of the poem as a whole and its personal significance to its author.

If we read the episode of the door as Armour argues we should, not only the episode itself but the whole of Dante's Purgatory becomes a powerful indirect criticism of the corruption of the earthly Church, and especially its abuse of the power to excommunicate and grant indulgences—a criticism which lends a striking weight to the more explicit attacks scattered throughout the poem. Moreover, Armour suggests, there is a remarkable convergence of the internal evidence of the poem and the little we know from external sources about Dante's life, which points to a direct personal experience of this corruption as the starting-point of the spiritual journey which the work represents. It is a real possibility that Dante went to Rome around Easter in the Jubilee Year 1300, the historical moment at which his journey in the *Comedy* purportedly takes place. Armour's concluding argument is that this did happen, and that the outrageous sale of indulgences in Rome during the Jubilee produced in him a spiritual crisis subsequently represented in

Peter Hainsworth astutely illustrates, there may emerge universal messages if the reader is perceptive enough to discern them. Pier Paolo Pasolini's sad but eventful life is well documented by John Gatt-Rutter, and Lino Pertile, in an amusing essay, emphasizes the commitment of Dario Fo, internationally appreciated dramatist and performer.

In such company Dino Buzzati may now seem staid, but Judy Rawson shows that the "escapism" of his narrative hides more profound meditations. Michael Caesar's high flights in the introduction wing lower in his realistic assessment of the relatively lightweight oeuvre of Elsa Morante. (After the eulogy of Gadda in the introductory essay, the reader might justifiably have expected an essay on him to displace Morante.) Leonardo Sciascia, on the other hand, is a more natural inclusion; his (literally) intriguing world is analysed by Verina Jones, who whets the appetite for further study of this committed humanist. As a culmination comes

veiled form in *Inferno* I and II; the metaphorical dangers by which Dante is there threatened stand for the real spiritual danger in which the corrupt Church placed him, and from which the other-worldly journey offered the only means of escape.

While this last notion is certainly an interesting speculation, one may well feel it unnecessary to seek such a concrete autobiographical meaning in the extended imagery with which Dante chose to introduce his poem; in particular, Armour's suggestion that the "river" or "stream" of *Inferno* II refers to the Tiber assumes an awkward intrusion of the literal into an otherwise highly figurative episode. In contrast, the main part of Armour's argument is much more cogent, indeed scarcely to be faulted, and fits the facts of Dante's text far better than the earlier view. Apart from the obvious objection that it depends on a view of the *comedy*'s literal meaning that many will find debatable, only one substantial point might be made against it: it offers no compelling evidence that the idea of Purgatory in another Church is one that Dante would have found in his sources or in the culture of his time. If we are to believe that he conceived of Purgatory in this way, we must conclude that his conception was mainly his own—a conclusion which, given the astonishing inventive power that the whole *Comedy* displays, we can without much difficulty accept.

Italo Calvino, the one pioneering post-war Italian author who has continually exploited, in Richard Andrews's words, "the most unthought alternative, the one which none of the orthodoxies has yet been able to see".

The authors discussed clearly mark the line of the volume towards a political Left. An English reader might be forgiven for supposing this to be the only literary bias in post-war Italy, yet Bacchelli, Cardarelli, Cecchi and a dozen "reactionaries" sell well and the 1950s which saw the formation of Gruppo 63 marked the centenary of D'Annunzio's birth and the revitalization of the D'Annunzio industry, which culminated in 1983 with its largest and most appreciative biography to date of this anathema to the Left; while, paradoxically, by a lifelong Communist, who that slight reservation, it is a pleasure to read about these authors without having to make constant allowance for the political line taken by Italian critics.

Consumerism rampant

N. S. Thompson

PIER PAOLO PASOLINI
Lutheran Letters. Translated by Stuart Hood. 129pp. Carcanet. £8.95. 0856354104

Lutheran Letters is a posthumous collection of the provocative articles which Pasolini started writing for the *Corriere della sera* in March, 1975; a series which spread to the weekly *Il Mondo* and which he continued up to the time of his death. The last piece in the collection is the address Pasolini was to have delivered at a Radical Party Congress in Florence two days after his body was found at Ostia: his appearance would have marked a return to the party political sphere from which he had been absent for over twenty-five years.

He was also planning the publication of his "Lutheran Letters" at the time of his death: the title is his and among his papers were found sketches for further articles rounding out the proposed collection. As the title would suggest, Pasolini is concerned with the moral state of the nation, examining the cultural and political changes that have occurred in Italy since Mussolini and the immediate post-war period, and, as he sees it, the loss of values which occurred in the neo-capitalist 1950s and 60s. From being almost a traditional peasant society in 1945, Italy underwent not so much an industrial as a Consumer Revolution, which, according to Pasolini's individualistic Marxist analysis,

was brought about the loss of traditional values among the lower classes and a homogenization of the middle strata, based on bourgeois self-interest. He launches a bitter attack against the crime wave among the young, linking it to the overwhelming pressure exerted on them to fit good middle-class consumers; they either reach in their urge for acquisition of drugs and into the underworld of drugs in a search for an alternative.

Pasolini has two striking "modest proposals" to stop the rot: the suspension of obligatory secondary education and of television until a satisfactory effort is made to reverse the cultural regression. The collection also contains an essay which calls for the whole Government to be put on trial for corruption. *Lutheran Letters* is also a political interest. *Lutheran Letters* is also the record of a sensitive artist's reaction to the consequences of profound social change and many of the themes in his prose, poetry and film are here treated in a very different manner.

Su Per Meneghella, edited by Giulio Leydi (264pp. Milan: Edizioni di Comunità. £30,000. 88 245 0002 1) is a collection of twenty essays in honour of Luigi Meneghella, who retired from the professorship of Italian literature at the University of Reading in 1980. The book is divided into two parts: the first part devoted to Meneghella's own writings, the second containing essays in his honour. Contributors include Cesare Segre, Barry Hines, John A. Scott, Frank Kermode and Stuart Woolf. The volume also contains a detailed bibliography of Meneghella's work.

Cosmogonical connexions

G. L. Huxley

M. L. WEST
The Orphic Poems. 275pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £25. 0198148542

Orpheus was a legendary Thracian poet and teacher. Orphism is, or was, an insubstantial religion constructed by scholars out of myths, cults, verses and ritual connected with his name. Arnold Toynbee's ancient Orphic Church is a historiographical curiosity, but if Orphism is now obsolete, the poetry ascribed to Orpheus remains a respectable domain of enquiry.

M. L. West is an able investigator. His book is erudite, crisp and timely. In 1962 a charred papyrus roll of the fourth century was rescued from a tomb near Derweni in Macedonia. Through the skill of Anton Fackelmann in Vienna over 150 scraps were recovered and set in order. The text presents hexameters from a cosmogonical poem together with an allegorical commentary. The *editio princeps*, due soon, has been so long in coming from Thessalonike that there has been philological impatience and even the impropriety of unauthorized publication. G. M. Parassoglou, one of the current editors, has generously supplied Professor West with a complete text; the hexameters are presented here, together with extensive supplements and combinations with other fragments *exempli gratia*.

Aided by the Derveni verses West has been able to construct a stemma of Orphic cosmogonies. The connexions run from Near Eastern antecedents through early Greek epics to the "Protagonos Theogony", upon which the Derveni text depends. Thence we are led to the Orphic Rhapsodies by way of other theogonies, including that expounded by Eudemos the Peripatetic. There are details attractive to anyone interested in modern cosmology: for example, Phanes-Protagonos is a primal creator of light; seen only by Night, he fills the world with his radiance, but, later, Zeus, acting as a divine Black Hole, swallows him and absorbs all his powers.

The book provides more than the title indicates. There is a neat account of the fifth-century inscribed bone plates from Soviet excavations at Olbia. A bonus is a new edition of "Linos". Students of Aristaeus of Prokonnesos will be pleased to see Thracian and Orphic ties with Asiatic shamanism taken seriously. Due emphasis is given to Dionysos Zagreus at Delphi and to the Cretan Koureutes. Orphic connexions of Empedokles through Pythagoras are considered—Cretan links of Empedokles through the Cretans of Akragas and Gela also deserve investigation.

West fully defends his right to speculate. In general the speculations are instructive, but in the excursions into Near Eastern cosmogony there are occasional threats of what in biblical studies is called parallelomania. Likenesses between cosmogonical systems may indicate a propensity in human thinking, not intellectual connexions, and when a connexion is shown to be probable, there is still the problem of determining the direction of borrowing. West takes the reader on some exciting tours from Apsu to

Zurvan; sometimes one must be resolute in willing suspension of disbelief, as for example in the breathtakingly conditional sentence, "If we removed Ohrmazd and Ahriman from the story, and made Time the agent throughout, we should have something very close to the Orphic cosmogony" (p. 200). But he is right to look far afield—to India, Egypt, Phoenicia, Babylonia and Iran, as well as to the steppes.

A few comments on particular problems will help to indicate the range of this rewarding book. P. 10: the reference to Prodikos, "the famous sophist from Samos", in connexion with the alleged authorship of *The Descent* is baffling, since Prodikos the sophist is said to have come from Keos. P. 49: a sixth-century incandescent moon is here distinguished from a fifth-century reflecting moon with physical features, flora and fauna. West claims that the Epimenean Lion of Nemea must come from the latter, so that the hexameters about the Lion's lunar origin are to be dated in the fifth century. Doubts, however, arise when we perceive that Aelian, who quotes the verses, has been discussing the fiery nature of lions. P. 59: Nikolaus Walter thought that the line "And on the seventh day everything is complete" was the work of a Jew. West objects that everything is complete on the sixth day in Genesis: he thinks also that we should have to amend to "was complete". But the verse may well be a midrash on Genesis 2:2a, where according to early variants God ended his work on the seventh day. The tense is not a problem if God is speaking. P. 110: the suggestion that the "Protagonos Theogony" may well have been composed about 500 BC and for a Bacchic society

more was said of the general ancient obsession, born of Greek logic or "dialectic", with organizing a subject by dividing and subdividing it (differently from and better than your rivals). But whether this rebarbative material can really be made much clearer than it is here (with the aid of a useful glossary of technical terms) is open to doubt. There is, however, inevitably a marked contrast with the other chapters, which are much lighter going. Several evoke the strange world of the imaginary judicial speech *controversia* in Latin), where the legal and political framework is loosely based on that of classical Athens, but the citizens are placed in the most appalling dilemmas by pirates, tyrants and fathers going to renouncing their sons, while rape, adultery and suicide (for the last of which one must persuade a tribunal to give permission) are commonplace.

The political speeches set in the mouths of

historical characters (*suasoriae*) hark back more obviously to the fifth and fourth centuries BC, and here gross anachronism is avoided. In both kinds of speech the language is also the Attic dialect of that period, and Russell interestingly though briefly notes the way in which this language drew on the comedy and historiography, as well as the oratory, of the time, and how, when assuming the role of Demosthenes, one did not produce an exact pastiche of his style. Like its language, the history of the Hellenistic age was rejected by the nostalgic Greeks of the Empire; and Rome itself might not have been. Though Russell perhaps exaggerates the genuinely democratic nature of "Sophistopolis"—*democrazia* in later Greek means no more than constitutional government—he to some extent explores the gap, and the occasional correspondences, between the world of the declamations and the

real world, though a historian might wish to go further. Ancient critics of rhetorical education had observed this gap, especially the more down-to-earth Romans.

Russell observes that with the baroque excesses of Hellenistic prose some slightly lubricious subjects of declamation had probably also been swept away; but he puts the moralizing tendency of some late work down to the increasing closeness of rhetoric and philosophy. These had earlier been often at odds, rivals for the souls of the young. For us there can be no comparison between the achievements of Greek philosophy and Greek rhetoric. But if we are to understand Greek *paideia* or education (which was regarded as almost synonymous with Greek civilization), at least in its later manifestations, it will not do simply to dismiss Greek declaimers, with the Elder Seneca, as "the most amiable kind of fool".

Factual fabrications

P. A. Brunt

N. G. L. HAMMOND
Three Historians of Alexander the Great: The so-called Vulgate authors, Diodorus, Justin and Curtius. 205pp. Cambridge University Press. £20. 0521254515

Our knowledge of Alexander comes almost entirely from works written three or four centuries after his time; their value cannot be greater than that of the contemporary accounts on which they draw. Even in antiquity these had a bad name for mendacity. However, Arrian presents a relatively coherent and sober version of events, explicitly based on the generally congruent narratives of Ptolemy and Aristobolus, who were with Alexander on his expedition. Most modern scholars, including N. G. L. Hammond in the life of Alexander which he published in 1981, have preferred this testimony to that which conflicts with it, preserved in the histories of Diodorus and Curtius and in Justin's epitome of Trogus, the three historians whose sources Hammond examines in his new book.

None of these writers expressly tells us what his sources were. But it is plain that they often followed the same authority, and comparison of their accounts with the meagre citations of

ancient writers in summarizing, transcribing or paraphrasing their sources. Incoherencies in an epitomizer like Diodorus do not necessarily prove that he was combining different accounts rather than imperfectly reproducing one. Similarly the so-called fragments of lost authors need not be faithful reports of the language or content of what they wrote.

Hammond also ascribes to Clitarchus mendacious denigration of Alexander and the Macedonians. This is improbable. Clitarchus was a subject and flatterer of Ptolemy, and though Ptolemy's own history was evidently not available to him, Ptolemy's attitude to Alexander must have been patent; not to speak of their early friendship, and of Ptolemy's promotion by Alexander, his prestige as king in Egypt was enhanced by his entombment of Alexander. I find no evidence of malignity to Alexander in Diodorus. Curtius and Trogus did indeed suggest that he was corrupted by power, but this was an interpretation (whether true or false) that could readily have been adopted by any later writer reflecting on even the facts that Arrian records. But to Hammond, as his earlier book shows, the least criticism of his hero is proof of rancour, and any actions that might support it, if not corroborated by Arrian (and these can all be excused or justified), are falsifications. Neither Hammond's presuppositions nor his often ingenious examinations of texts convince me that any of his novel theses should be accepted.

Aged faces, young Turks

John Clute

HILMA WOLITZER
In the *Palomar Arms*
315pp. Harvill Press. £8.95.
0002713489
ANNE LEATON
Mayakovsky, My Love
205pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth Press.
£8.95 (paperback, £3.95).
0701128143

There is a taste of ashes to Hilma Wolitzer's new novel. In the *Palomar Arms* begins just after a bout of high passion, with Daphne and Kenny "resting in a grand, wet, postcoital tangle on her foldout bed". But this is the high point of her story. The rest is aftermath, a melancholy detailing of the costs of adultery in the solitudes of suburban Los Angeles.

Tax accountant Kenny's marriage with svelte, frigid Joy has frozen over, though their Disneyesque children continue to tug the heartstrings of both partners. University student Daphne with hair to her waist brings new life to Kenny. They make love, secretly, again and again, before the novel begins. We discover that he has promised to leave his family and to marry her. She is exuberant, but feels a premonitory chill.

This is justified. Soon after being told of the affair, Joy attempts suicide, and the feckless Kenny returns to her. They engage separate therapists and begin to work out their tepid destinies. During these events, Daphne has continued to work part-time at the Palomar Arms Senior Home, where she begins to confront her own destiny in the faces of the aged.

The heart of the novel is here.

Kenny and Joy have no surprises in them for the reader of romantic fiction, and Wolitzer's occasional deft insights make them bear more reality — even momentarily — than they can sustain; in her infatuation with a feather-brained, humourless tax accountant and his ranch house, Daphne too is a figure thinly imagined indeed. Only with the old folks does Wolitzer intermittently make something of her tale.

There is surely nothing new about them, or in her rendering of their lives, but that is after all the reality of the condition they face, as they wind down from day to day, and die. There are moments of barbed melancholy as we watch them shrink. It may be, too, that we are intended to read their sterile decline as an analogue of the state of married life and adultery in southern California, and elsewhere. If that is so, then once again in the *Palomar Arms* fails to surprise, for the lesson sinks in long before the tale is ended.

Some of the stories in *Mayakovsky, My Love* also exhaust themselves before they close, because Anne Leaton inhabits her various worlds so intensely that she does not know when to stop. In "Destiny", for instance, the longest tale in this very fine collection, she does not seem to realize when the reader has understood enough of her vision of provincial Turkey to grasp the essential revelation she is attempting to convey — about the appalling David Fairweather, a quiet young American with mad blue eyes, who has gone native (or so he thinks), first in Istanbul, then in a backwater village. Deaf to the rhythms of the real Turkey, he seeks, and believes he has found, the true

authentic flavour of life itself, far from the airless terrors of midwestern America. He marries a Turkish girl from Istanbul who hates the provinces and who leaves him scandalously. He nearly destroys the local school at which he teaches English; he tries to marry a whore; he is a laughing stock. But that is not the revelation. Though she takes too long to get there, what Leaton has to reveal is something different. Fairweather is grotesque, comical, abandoned. But as a caricature he enters the world at last. He is recognized there. He is dense with cultural meaning, for others, and he is happy. It is almost irrelevant that he continues to talk nonsense.

In all of Leaton's stories, the shape of a destiny is far more important than its content. The brain damage which silences the heroine of "Tracks to the Cold Country" may seem like a matter for challenging hypothesis. Virginia Moriconi's fine, fascinating work offers three attempts at the truth. The first belongs to mythology. The anonymous genderless narrator relays a story of fresh certainties, told over the kitchen fire by an elderly Italian peasant. It has the compelling simplicity of superstition distilled from game of Chinese Whispers played by the servants in a great, if ramshackle, household. The Dowager Princess had sent to succour Prince Orlando, his door was not closed on his fever, his poor Ninetta's door did not open even to a apothecary's art. What, said the third footman, the gardener's boy, what, said the head chambermaid the laundress, was the meaning of that?

In the second version, the skeleton is recognizable but the body belongs to an altogether higher beast. The narration is filtered, sometimes almost inconsequentially, through documents: letters from the Princess Clotilda to her sister in Madrid; the private jottings of the eccentric Princess Henrietta; progress reports sent home to her patroness by the automaton Father Orlando. Each of the documents is absorbing in itself. Clotilda's letters are thoughtful, taking in an ill-adviced crossing of revolutionary France in a closed carriage (for the entire journey Fausta refused to step herself in the Berline, although a sweetly-wedged Bedroom Utensil had been provided) and the Austrian occupation of Venice, and as the concerned reports on her parental home at Q. made by the visiting daughter.

Every detail they incidentally contribute to redefining the mysteries of Q. is an extra deflection. Not that these elegant messages from the Age of Reason crimp the awfulness of the central events. Reality, in its documented form, is subtler, more plausible and less grand than that of the oral tradition, overlaying metaphorical force with psychological depth. The third section of the book offers not so much the perspective conferred by a new direction as the corrective view from inside the circle. It consists of a conversation between the last descendants of the House of Q., defending their murky inheritance courteously and obstinately against the incursions of historians and tourists alike. If earlier generations have the written page for their instrument, their twentieth-century offspring, literally a bastard version of themselves, analyse predicaments and make their judgments through "elliptical excursions" into dialogue. The contents of letters and diaries assert themselves as ascertainable fact, admissible evidence for the trial that the novel tacitly stages; but the final members of the House of Q., with first-hand experience of what it is to be an isolated and imported bride, offer a qualifying verdict. They tease the historians and the reader by dandling the ultimate piece of documentation, a missing set of journals. They query, in any case, whether the contents record deeds or desires.

"How, I wonder, are we to come to terms with the Past?" asks Clotilda, looking from the ominous family to a new century of Turkish Night, 1800. "We will stop to dwell on it, I think, each of us in his fashion." The fashion adopted, Virginia Moriconi suggests, the question of whom you believe and whose side you are on, is a matter of temperament, of education, and even, in this nice environment, of breeding. Between them these responses piece out a composite and entrancing history. This is a virtuosic performance; Moriconi is equally comfortable constructing gothic fables. Father Orlando's chilling correspondence, the dance of contemporary dialogue. The final page of *The Princess of Q.* invites a quick return to the first.

House of horror

Joanna Motion

VIRGINIA MORICONI
The Princess of Q
223pp. Duckworth. £8.95.
0715618083

The Italian, cosmopolitan Princess of Q. is haunted and ultimately debilitated by the family horror story. At the core of their history, sending out waves of evil over later generations, are three terrible deaths. That much is undisputed. But the circumstances of the deaths, their motives and morality, the attitudes and even the looks of the people involved, are a matter for challenging hypothesis.

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Part of the answer is that Abish is clearly uneasy with the given forms of narrative but doesn't quite know what to do about it. The result is a continuous attempt at "alienation effect", plus an exorcising whimsy, as in the opening to the fourth story: "In the cradle of civilization men and women habitually sat face-to-face. They sat on stone benches or on the ground. The art of costume design was already well-advanced, although, I might add, these events preceded the invention of the door-knob and the windowpane."

Yet such writing, like that of Coover or Barthelme, is highly regarded in America, where clearly both style and content find echoes in many hearts. Fiction which deals, though, only with people whose principal interests are sex, being unpleasant to their spouses or blowing people up, even if this is an authentic image of present-day America, makes for tedious reading. The attempt to inject pathos by the use of resonant epigraphs and concentration camps turns the tedious into the unpleasantly vulgar.

In Oklahoma

Driving to Anadarko was like flight,
Gliding and grazing the surfaces of land
That flowed away from one secretly,
Yet seemed — all sparsely-treed immensity —
To have nothing to hide. Only the red
Declared itself among the leached-out shades.
Rose into the buttes, seeped through the plain,
And left, in standing pools, one wine-dark stain.
The trees, with their survivors' look, the grasses
Yellowing into March refused their space.
Those colours that would quicken to the ring
Of the horizon each declivity
And flood all in the sap and flare of spring.
The wilderness waited. Sun kept clouded back.
An armadillo, crushed beside the road,
Dried out to a plaque of faded blood.
Here, fundamentalists have pitched their spires
Lower than that abettor of wrath to come —
The tower of the tornado siren
Latticed in iron against a doubtful sky.

CHARLES TOMLINSON

Anadarko is an Indian site. Near here the Tishomingo Falls Massacre took place in 1864.

Revealing the Reformer

Robert Scribner

HEINRICH BORNKAMM
Luther in Mid-Career 1521-1530
Translated by E. Theodore Bachmann
709pp. Darton, Longman and Todd. £25.
0232151956

The Tübingen church historian Heinrich Bornkamm, who died in 1977, was one of the pre-eminent Luther scholars of the post-war era. For almost thirty years he had been planning a major biography of the Reformer covering the central period of his career, the years 1521-30. Bornkamm believed that it was necessary to break away both from sentimentality and hero-worship of Luther, and from the abstract and over-systematized approach to his theology prevalent in Luther scholarship since the late nineteenth century. He wished to produce a biography which would set Luther firmly in the historical situations and experiences of his time, and show how his theology grew out of his responses to them. Bornkamm never brought this project to completion, and *Luther in Mid-Career 1521-1530* was put together from an incomplete manuscript by his daughter after his death. Written over a considerable number of years, and first published in German in 1979, it is difficult to assess this work in terms of modern scholarship. Of necessity, it takes no account of the very considerable flowering of Reformation studies since 1975, especially those on the urban Reformation and the German Peasants' War. It is fair, however, to ask how far it lives up to Bornkamm's idea of a new, more historical biography of Luther.

First, it should be said that the translation does not always serve the book well. It is aimed at an American readership, and includes many terms and phrases which jar on the ear this side of the Atlantic ("Wow!", "A good guy", "sophomoric"). There are some poor translations, such as "latest action" instead of Imperial Recess for *Reichstagsabschied*; or "counter-Christ" for *Antichristen*, or missing the invocation of the link with the Antichrist in *translating Rotten* as "mobs" in reference to peasant bands conveys a distinctly prejudicial reading of the Peasants' War. Given the problems of preparing a posthumous manuscript, the editorial work is reasonably good, with only the occasional howler — for example, the "Joachim tradition" is explained on page 103 not as a reference to the ideas associated with the twelfth-century Abbot Joachim of Fiore, but to Joachim, the father of the Virgin Mary.

Bornkamm succeeds admirably in showing how Luther's thought developed in response to changing circumstances, but he never loses sight of the Reformer's central theological insights. His chapters describing Luther's reactions to the evangelical movements of the 1520s alternate with others devoted largely to exposition of Luther's theology. He discusses the troubles in Wittenberg, the problem of social unrest, the challenge of the radicals and the Anabaptists, the disagreements with the Zwinglians, the imperial politics involved in the progress of church reform and the organization of the newly emergent reformed churches. There are lucid expositions of theological debates: Luther's disagreements with Karlstadt, Müntzer, Erasmus and Zwingli. Bornkamm brilliantly uses Luther's dispute with the Louvain theologian Latomus to give an excellent exposition of the Reformer's views on justification and hermeneutics. There are also incisive chapters on Luther's theology of civil government and social ethics. In all of this, Bornkamm writes with the ease of one excellently acquainted with the widest range of twentieth-century Luther scholarship. Despite its considerable length, the book is pleasant to read because of the exemplary clarity and concision with which it explains historical and theological concepts. In this respect, it should satisfy both specialist and non-specialist readers alike.

None the less, Bornkamm only partly escapes from the constraints of traditional Luther biography. Certainly, there is no overt hero-worship, but Bornkamm can often be over-liturgical about Luther's talents, for example about his poetic gift as a biblical translator. Here he too easily passes over the fact that Luther provided more a version of the Bible than a translation, admittedly a version applied to the culture and conceptualization of his own age, but slanted towards his own theological views, sometimes with considerable distortion of scholarship. Luther's experience is always taken as a touchstone of what is or is not correct, producing a teleological view of the Reformation which is inevitably Luther-centred and Wittenberg-centred. Karlstadt and Müntzer are dismissed as "hotheads" and "sectarians", motivated by distrust and hatred. The North German Reformer Johann Amandus is stigmatized as a "Prussian Thomas Münster", an "egocentric demagogue". Zwingli is depicted as engaging in "cheap irony", Martin Bucer is accused of "dubious pranks". These are all judgments which might on occasion have been applied to Luther himself, but Bornkamm rarely has any critical word to say about his subject. He does speak of Luther's "terrible harness" during the Peasants' War, but exonerates him of any blame — despite the strong criticism of him by many Lutherans of that time, whose comments Bornkamm dismisses as lacking in understanding.

In writing biography it is always difficult to strike a balance between necessary empathy with one's subject and impartial judgment of

his or her thought and actions. When the subject is Luther, there is the added danger of identifying with Luther's own religious experience or theological viewpoint. This has often led traditional historiography of the Reformation into seeing Luther's view of reform both as normative and as the only valid evangelical experience. Bornkamm was too good a historian to fall into the excessive adulation of his subject that characterized the era of confessional history, but enough traces of that mode remain to ensure that this is not the genuinely objective biography that Bornkamm envisaged. Indeed, he even argues for the necessity of treating Luther and Wittenberg as a focal point from which "everything else must find its perspective and place". This is reflected in his use of sources, overwhelmingly the Weimar edition of Luther's own works, supported by those of other Reformers. Little use is made of the kind of sources drawn on in studies of the urban Reformation, which provide quite a different perspective both of Luther and of the evangelical movements of the age.

Bornkamm's biography looks backwards rather than forwards in another respect. This is the tendency to regard Luther teleologically as the forerunner of things "modern", and to fail to relate his mentality to that of the sixteenth century. This is most apparent on two themes. Luther's views of the Devil and of eschatology. Bornkamm does not ignore their central role in Luther's outlook, but tends to reduce them to abstract concepts emptied of the emotive force they had for Luther's age. Thus, Luther's frequent mention of the Devil is described as "his way of perceiving the cunning power of evil", his eschatological view of the Turkish threat as marking a divide between "medieval" and "modern" political thinking (for Luther, this was a confirmatory sign of the imminence of the Last Days — something Bornkamm mentions, but does not expand upon).

A final judgment must be that this is not the "new biography" demanded by our recent understanding of the Reformation. To achieve that, Luther must be set more completely in the entire spectrum of his age. The validity of the religious and social experience of Luther's contemporaries which diverged from his own must be more fully recognized. Sympathy for the human dimension of history should not be accorded just to the subject of a biography, but to all the actors with whom he or she came into contact. We can duly honour, however, Bornkamm's immense scholarship and his outstanding contribution towards a better historical understanding of Luther. Despite its limitations, this study of Luther in mid-career is a truly remarkable achievement, illuminating and enjoyable to read. Though the "new biography" of Luther remains to be written, without the labours of Heinrich Bornkamm it might not be a conceivable enterprise.

should not expect more than good questions. For all its merits this book is not likely to set anyone on fire. The depth of the Archbishop's own belief does not come across. He is like a judge who sums up fairly, without saying anything that might influence the jury. He seems to be too bound by the thoughts of this present age; we want to know where we are going, as well as where we are. One may reasonably expect an Archbishop to view the present *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Habgood is at his best in the "Theological Reflections on Compromise" with which the book ends. Everyone engaged in public life would do well to read it, whatever their views on religion. It is good that "Christians who are prepared to get their hands dirty and to face the realities of political compromise are much more common than they used to be".

The theological teaching and development of the Ethiopian Church are not widely known. In *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 33 (477pp. Cambridge University Press. £35, 0 521 24561 3), Roger Cowley provides an account of its biblical and patristic commentary material, together with translations of samples of commentaries on the Apocalypse of John.

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